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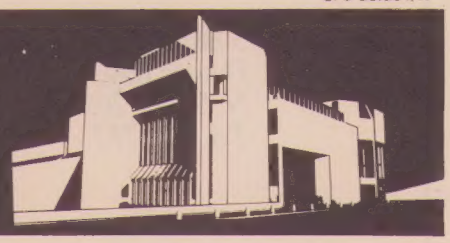

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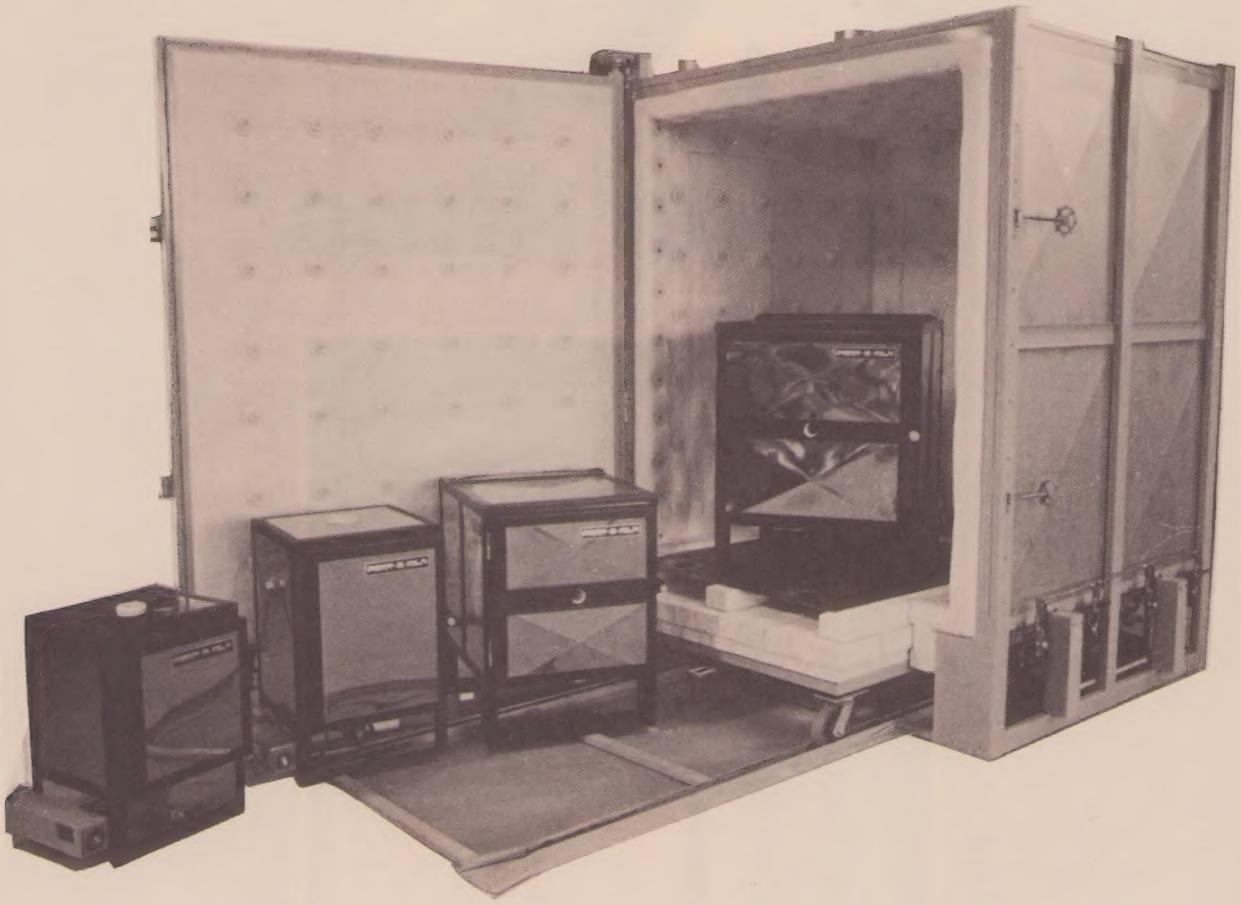

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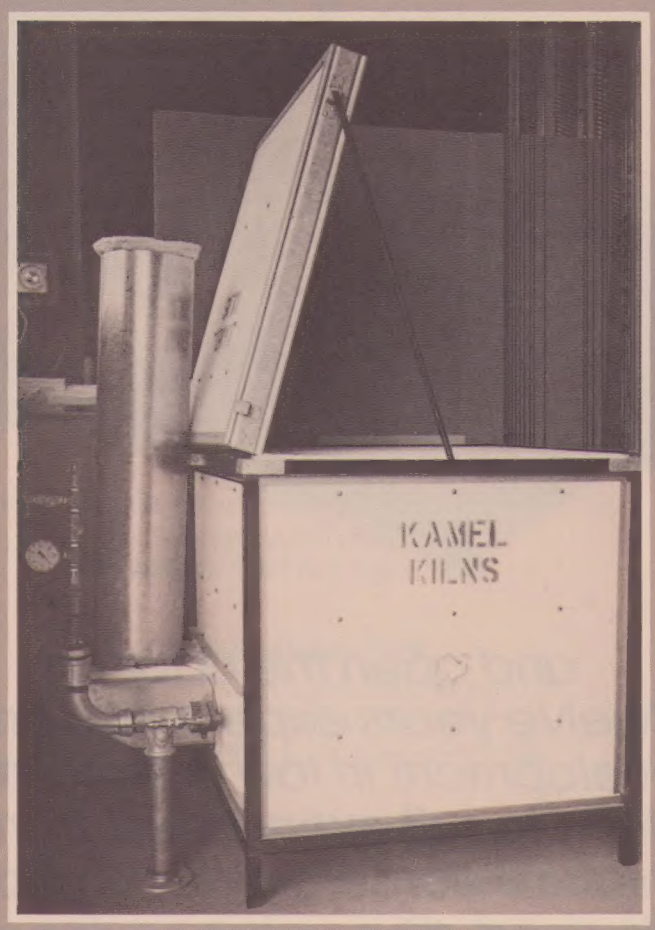

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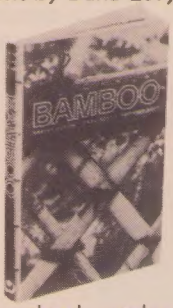

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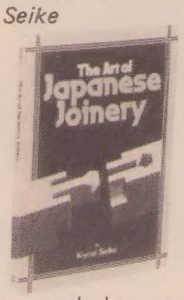

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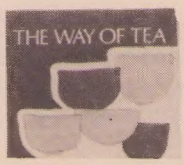

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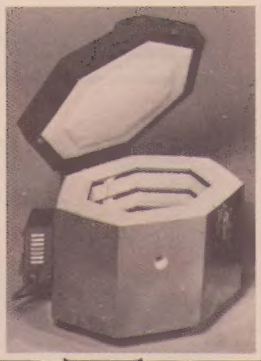

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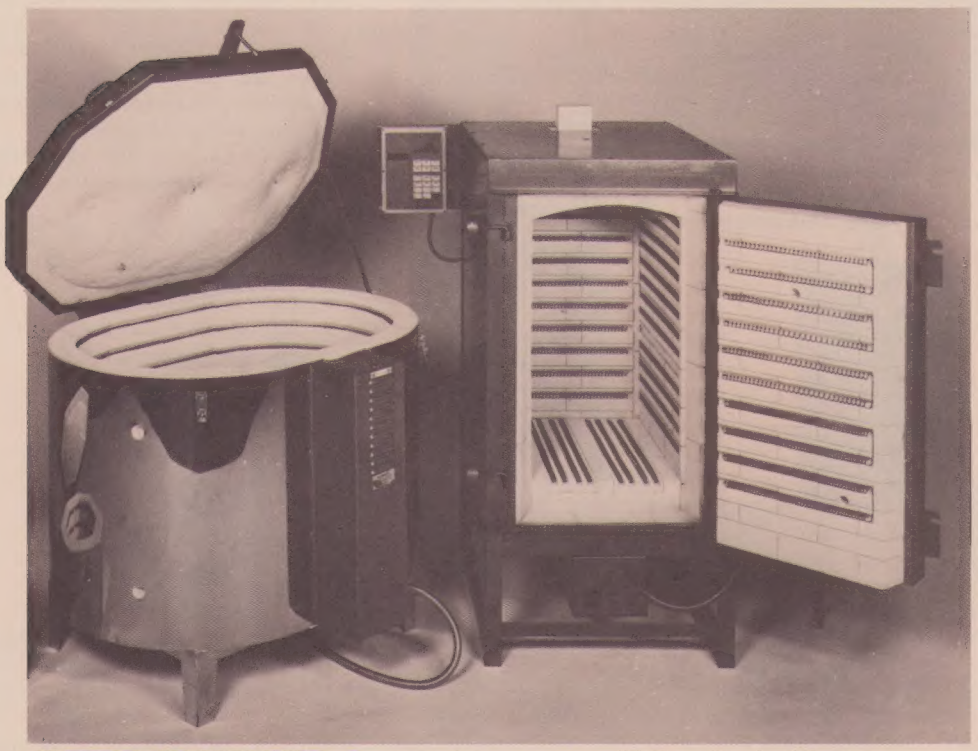

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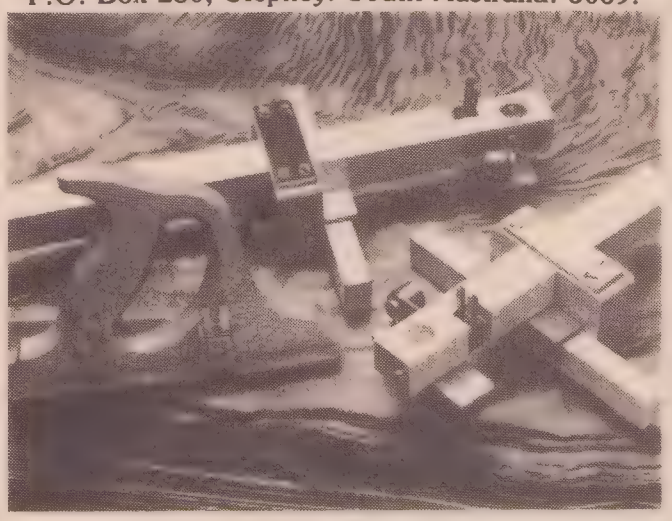

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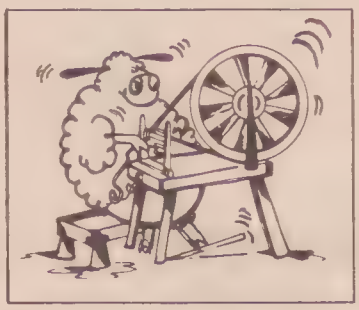

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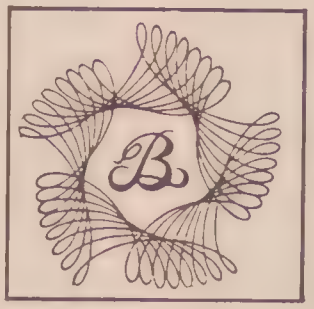

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However, many subscription problems are not really problems — merely a need for information. Perhaps, by reading the following information, any questions you may have regarding your subscription will be answered.

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Craft Australia is published four times a year at regular intervals which coincide with the seasons — Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. Occasionally an issue is delayed for up to four weeks from the commencement of a seasonal quarter, but should always arrive before the end of the quarter. If your magazine stops coming, or there is an interruption in your service, please write to us at 100 George Street, Sydney, 2000, and let us know so that we can correct the situation and, if necessary, replace missing copies.

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Cover

Garry Greenwood, 'Body Panel', 1983. Leather sculpture, 150 x 100 cm.

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Contents

This issue of *Craft Australia* should be in your hands before the onset of the festive season. We hope that its timely arrival contributes to your enjoyment of the Christmas holiday and inspires an even stronger resolve to become actively involved in contemporary crafts during the New Year. Perhaps there is someone special to whom you would like to send a gift subscription as a constant reminder of your friendship and goodwill? Although at this late stage we cannot guarantee that they will receive their gift before Christmas, we feel sure that it will be heartily appreciated throughout the New Year.
This Summer issue brings to a close a year marked by exceptional documentation of contemporary craftwork. Over the last four issues we have seen *Craft Australia* grow from strength to strength in size, editorial content and circulation. At the start of 1983 the magazine adopted an enlarged format and throughout the year included many additional features such as the College Work Supplement, Studio/Workshop Guide, Gallery Profile and the Galleries and Exhibitors section.

These new developments have brought Craft Australia up to its maximum size (within the 500g mailing category specified by Australia Post), but this does not mean there will be no further improvements next year. In fact, now that the magazine has levelled out at approximately 128 pages per edition, we are looking at ways to improve editorial and photographic content.
The form that these improvements take will be influenced by the analysis of the returned readership questionnaires which went out with the previous issue. The response to the Readership Survey has been overwhelming and large numbers of completed forms are still pouring in daily. The process of analysis and assessment is already underway and we hope to have a detailed breakdown of the results ready for publication in the forthcoming Autumn issue.
The pre-publication offer on the 1st *Craft Australia Yearbook* has also been taken up by hundreds of subscribers and I would like to remind those who have yet to place their order that there is still time to do so by completing the coupon in this issue. This is the last opportunity to obtain the *Yearbook* at the special pre-publication price.

The wave of patriotism that swept the country following *Australia II's* historic victory at Rhode Island Sound is indicative of this nation's quest for recognition, confidence and self-esteem in international circles. Perhaps the manifestation of such spontaneous enthusiasm for the triumph of Australian skill and ingenuity will help dispel the cultural cringe in other areas of endeavour and mark the beginning of a new epoch in the appreciation of the nation's untapped reservoirs of creative talent. Let us hope that this is the case, because the contemporary crafts movement in Australia is producing work equal to that of any other nation in the world.

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Since computerising our mailing list we have received a number of complaints from subscribers who were mistakenly informed that their subscription has expired. We sincerely apologise for the inconvenience caused by this malfunction of our new mailing system and offer our assurances that the matter is being rectified. For further information on subscriptions please refer to the righthand column of the opposite page.

Craft Australia is published by the Crafts Council of Australia, 100 George Street, Sydney Phone: 241 1701

Editor: Ken Lockwood
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Crafts Council office bearers comprise:
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Distributed by GORDON & GOTCH Ltd., Melbourne, Sydney.

Craft Australia is published by the Crafts Council of Australia as its official journal. It is quite independent and receives no subsidies from state or federal organisations.

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Printed by the Dai Nippon Co. Pty. Ltd.
Phototypeset by Brian Publishing Company Pty Ltd, North Sydney.

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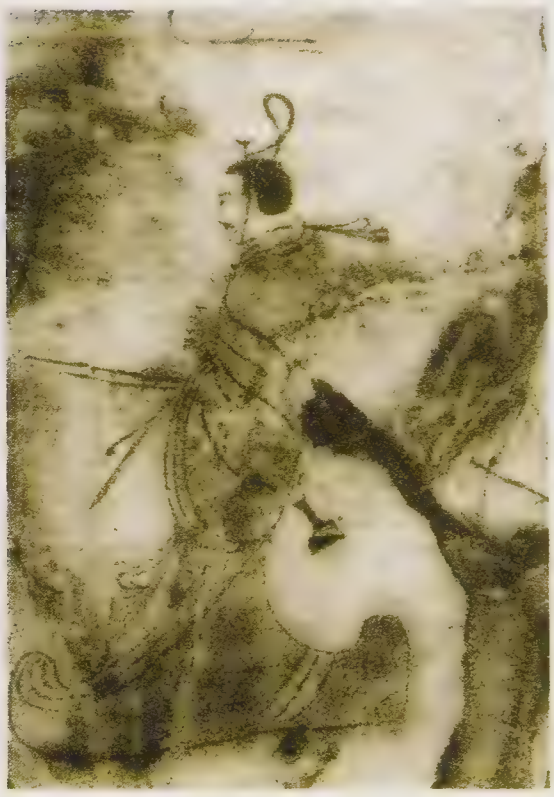
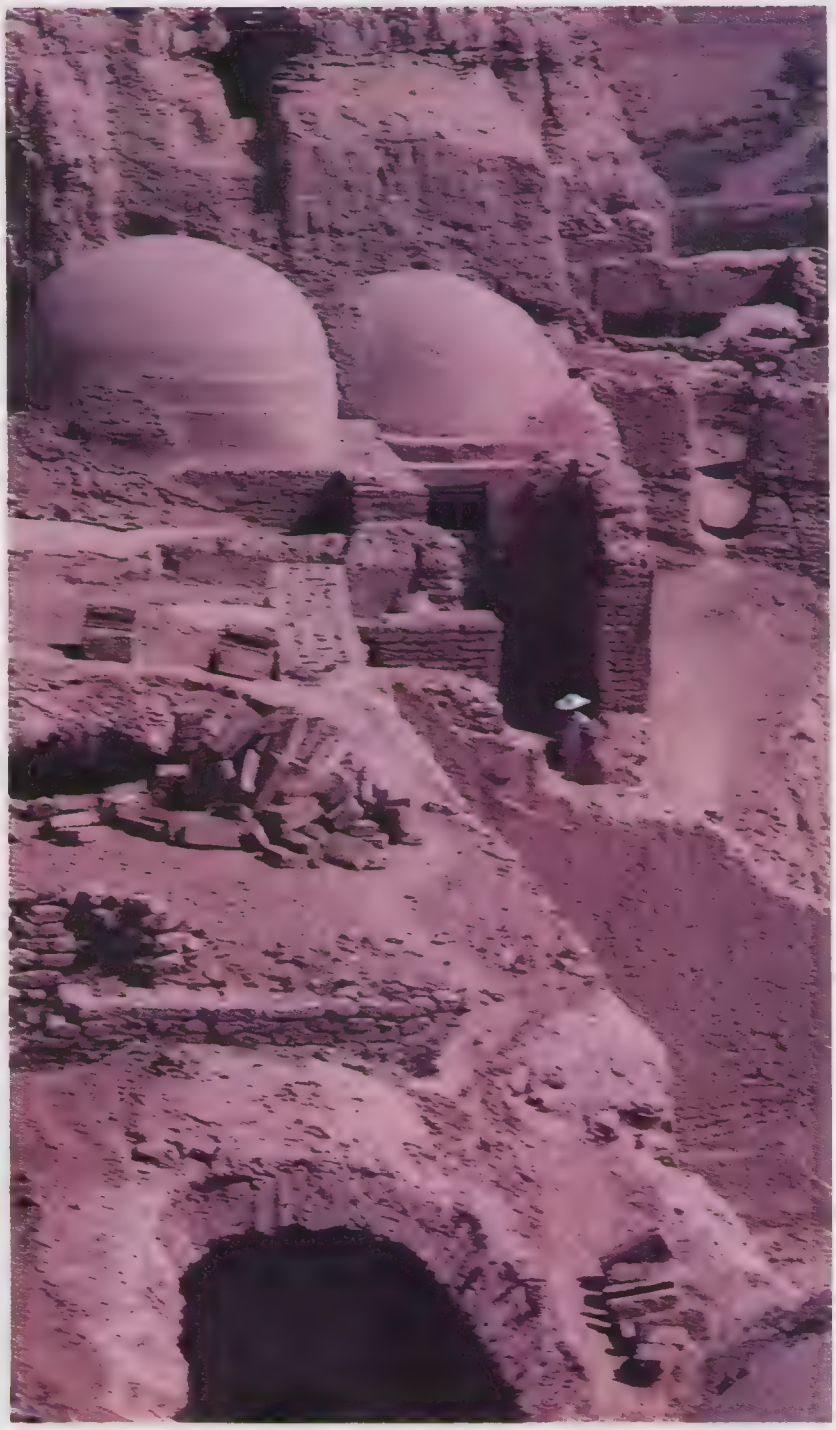
THE very name of "silk" is universally evocative of romantic and sensual images: visions of mysterious Cathay, of opulent luxury, of lustrous sheen and jewel colours, of fragility as delicate as butterfly wings. These were images prevalent amongst the hedonistic wealthy of Rome in the heyday of empire, and which have endured throughout history, maintaining silk's status as one of the most desirable of possessions.

In the 14th century, Tamerlane, the mighty Central Asian warrior king, carved out from Russia, India, Persia and China, an empire comprising one third of the then known world. He chose as his capital Samarkand, an important commercial centre on the overland trading route between east and west, and made it the most magnificent city in Asia. A visiting Spanish contemporary described in these words the sleeping quarters in one of the many palaces of the man whose name has otherwise come to be synonymous with butchery and atrocity.

'The interior was all most richly furnished with hangings on the walls, and within there was a chamber with three arched alcoves which were sleeping places, each with a raised dais, the walls and flooring being of coloured tiles. As you entered this chamber the largest of three alcoves was the one facing you, and here stood a silver and gilt screen the height of a man and the breadth of three outstretched arms. In front of this screen was a bed composed of mattresses, some covered with gold brocade, some with silk stuff worked with gold thread. This was the Emperor's couch. The walls hereabout were all hidden, being covered with rose-coloured silk hangings ornamented with spangles of silver plate, each spangle set with an emerald or pearl or other precious stone. Above these





Buddhist shrines were often established in caverns hollowed in rugged terrain and became repositories of art. Above: Entrance to the 1000 Buddha Caves at Turfan, an ancient oasis on the silk route where many treasures were found

Left: Detail of a painting on silk of a man riding a dragon, excavated recently from a 2,100-year old tomb in Hunan Province

wall hangings hung strips of silk attached to which were a number of coloured silk tassels that fluttered most agreeably in the breeze'.

In 1916, James Elroy Flecker's poem, 'The Golden Road to Samarkand', brought up-to-date the perceived romance and allure of the great highway along which had travelled the cargoes of silk and other exotic products. Interest in the Silk Road was kindled anew for Flecker's generation by exciting finds of silk then being made at archaeological sites connected with the ancient silk trade in Chinese Turkestan. Indeed the term "Silk Road" had been coined only in 1877 by a German scholar. When the decision had been made by Emperor Wu Ti in 123 BC to initiate trade overland with the western states beyond China's borders, the road was known as the Emperor's Route. For 15 centuries after that the Emperor's Route saw a flourishing trade centred on Chinese silk exports from the capital Chang'an to the western centres of civilisation.

But the story of silk began much earlier than the first century BC, in fact its beginnings are lost in remote antiquity. Earlier than 1000 BC the people of late Shang dynasty were already engaged in sericulture. Probably at first the Chinese of the late Stone Age collected the cocoons of the wild, or tussore, silkworm, dissolving the tiny balls of silk in hot water, and carding and spinning raw silk without unwinding the thread. From these they must have made garments and covers, cool in summer and surprisingly warm in winter, especially when padded with cotton and used in layers.

The step towards breeding silkworms for the express purpose of sericulture was a giant one because the production process requires highly developed agriculture with specialised techniques. *Bombyx mori* is a domesticated spinning moth, dependent on man for its culture. It is fed on mulberry leaves from trees specially grown for the purpose; different types of trees produce varying types and colours of the natural silk, and temperatures must be carefully regulated for the developing lavae. The minute eggs laid by spinning females can be kept for some time at low temperatures. When mulberry leaves are available, the temperature is increased to 28°C and within 10 to 20 days the larvae hatch. They develop quickly on their diet of leaves to a size of six centimetres, after a month and four changes of skin. Then they begin to spin their cocoons, from which the moth will break out within a month if the cocoon is left.

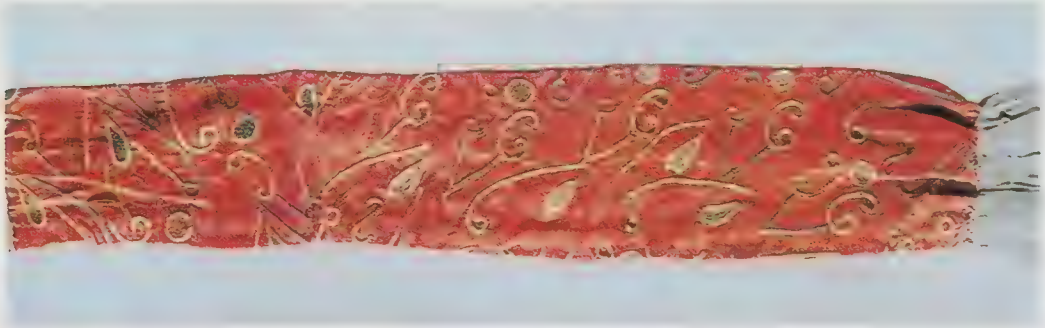
To produce silk thread, the cocoons are collected; any that are diseased or marked are discarded, and the remainder treated with heat to kill the moth. The next step is to immerse the cocoon in hot, not boiling, water and to gently brush off the fuzzy outer threads.

Up to this point sericulture is a cottage industry, albeit today practised in China on a very large scale by farmers and their families, often as a sideline to other farming. However the spinning of the silk demands technology of a high order to enable a sticky ball of silk on a hard core, in all no more than three centimetres long and two centimetres wide, to be unwound into a thread up to 1000 metres long. Before the start of the Christian era, the Chinese were using the principle of the crank which facilitated winding of the silken thread, and by the 11th century there was a printed description of a silk-winding machine using a foot pedal and a driving belt. Because the silk is so fine, five or more threads are wound together to make it stronger for weaving.

Above: Han warp-patterned weave, but with typical Tang dynasty motif depicting separate animals — bull, lion and elephant with rider — as distinct elements of design. Found in a 6th century tomb by Chinese archaeologists
Left: A typical Tang design showing a pair of birds enclosed by rings of pearls. Excavated at Turfan in 1969
Opposite: An embroidered silk hanging depicting rows of Buddhas found by Marc Aurel Stein at Dunhuang. The piece is composed of variously aged strips sewn together. Older sections on the right show a woman of nobility and a man being shaded by an umbrella-bearer

By the Han dynasty, 206 BC-220 AD, silk was being woven into beautiful damasks with self-coloured twill patterning. The characteristic decorative pattern of these early times was "linked lozenge", often with figures of beasts or birds facing each other inside the lozenges. Sometimes plain silk was afterwards embroidered, sometimes the fabric was dyed in jewel hues, and as new weaving techniques were developed, icy-white, translucent, gauzy, spider-web fine silks were also produced. During the cultural heights of the Tang dynasty, around the 7th century, under Sassanian (Persian) influence, design began to be created in the weft, and characteristic patterns were now featuring animals and birds, and sometimes riders, often in a symmetrical arrangement and encircled with small white dots symbolising pearls. In many cases patterning was achieved by tie-dyeing or by the wax-resistant batik method.

In the earliest times the main silk-producing areas were in the central Yellow River valley, in the Yangtse valley around Shanghai, and in the Pearl valley to the



Embroidered silk hat and sash of the Han dynasty, 206 BC-220 AD

Opposite page: Princess and Child. A fragment of silk embroidery found by a German expedition at Kocho, an ancient site of a Buddhist shrine, west of Dunhuang. The piece measures 17.5 x 14.0 cm, and is dated to the 9th century

The above photographs were supplied by courtesy of China Publications, Beijing

Fragment of painted silk depicting an exponent of the Chinese martial arts, found in the foothills near Turfan, dated 8th-9th century. Size: 29 x 47.5 cm. The German explorer Albert le Coq wrote: 'One of the peasants told me that five years before the first expedition arrived he had found five wagon-loads of pictures in coloured ink and gold paint. But because he had been fearful of the sinister nature of the writings he had thrown the entire library into the river

Photographs on page 22 and 23 were supplied by courtesy of the Museum for Indische Kunst Berlin

south. From here the precious cargoes, their production processes a jealously guarded secret, were gathered together in Chang'an for the caravans which would take them on the long journey of some 3000 kilometres through China's remote northwest to the towering ranges of the Himalayas, Hindukush and Pamirs which mark the border between east and west. Crossing the "Roof of the World", the traders would continue on to their markets, across Russia and through Samarkand, Bokhara and Merv, or through Persia, and thence to ports such as Antioch and Tyre on the shores of the eastern Mediterranean.

Probably no one group of caravans made the journey in its entirety, which would entail an absence from home for up to 10 years; rather there were probably merchants who were specialists in particular sectors of the route. And that route was no straight shimmering highway across a flat open plain. It was a path that had to be picked between oases in country as desolate and daunting as could be found anywhere in the world, across the Gobi and Taklamakan deserts, where water is at a premium, and howling, blinding sandstorms are the norm. At other times, exposed mountain slopes which take the full force of freezing winds had to be surmounted.

Such were the rewards, though, of taking silk to the rich cultural centres of the West, such as Rome and Alexandria, where it was literally worth its weight in gold, that traders were risking their lives to reach those markets for a hundred years or more before Emperor Wu made his decision to formalise trade with the West in 123 BC. The trade was not entirely composed of silk, but included Chinese jade, lacquerwork, furs, bronze and iron artefacts, and exotic plants and spices. Imports via the returning caravans were made up of Central Asian woollen and cotton goods, but above all fine Arabian horses. But in the long term perhaps the most important function of the Silk Route was to provide a passage for the exchange of ideas and philosophies.

As early as the 2nd century BC, Buddhist missionary monks were entering China from India along the overland route. In keeping with the Buddhist tradition of using art as a medium of instruction and communication, they carried temple banners of silk depicting scenes from the life of Buddha. As Buddhist communities sprang up in the wake of the missionaries, wealthy converts donated wall paintings and sculptures. Sometimes the shrines took the form of the usual temples; in other cases they were established in caves hollowed in cliff faces just off the main tracks. Over the next millenium, the shrines became rich repositories of art, the most famous being the Makao Grottoes at Danhuang in Kansu Province. However, in the 10th century the Turkic Uighur peoples of Chinese Turkestan converted to Islam, and Buddhism declined, the temples being neglected or actively destroyed.

After Marco Polo's 13th century journeys along the Silk Road, the sealing-off of China's borders resulted in the complete eclipse of the Turkestan culture, forgotten by all except the locals, and except for semi-mythological tales. But the muddy waters of oblivion were disturbed in the 19th century when the British and the Russians, eyeing each other suspiciously across the northern frontiers of India, began to jockey for position in Chinese Central Asia by encouraging adventurous scientists and scholars to turn their attention to this remote area. Other great powers like Sweden, Germany, France and Japan were equally interested in the possibilities of trade and empire.

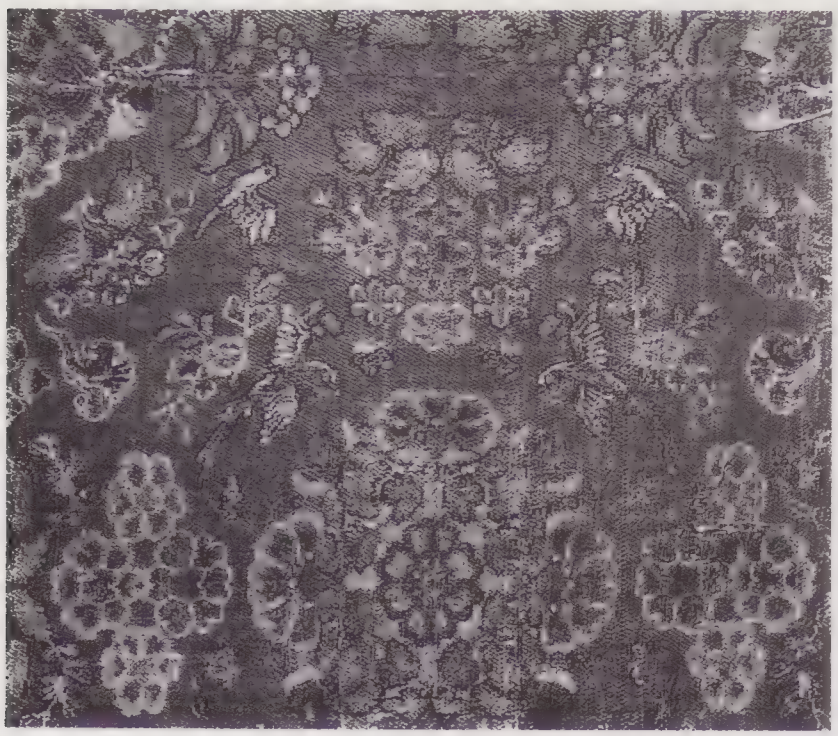
The finds made by the international explorers were spectacular. The Hungarian-born, naturalised Briton, Sir Marc Aurel Stein, is perhaps best known of the explorers in Serindia, as he termed the region. Today it is officially known as the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Republic of the Peoples' Republic of China. In four remarkable odysseys of exploration and archaeological investigation during the first couple of decades of this century, Stein retraced many sectors of the ancient Silk Route through China, and rediscovered the remnants of lost shrines, sending away load upon camel load of priceless Buddhist art and other historic treasures, which resulted in the re-writing of the history of Chinese Turkestan. At Dunhuang, Stein negotiated with the self-appointed curator of the Caves for the purchase, for £40, of a hidden cache of documents, scrolls, paintings on silk and other treasures, some dating back to the Tang dynasty, miraculously preserved in the arid desert conditions. These spoils were divided between the Delhi and British Museums after painstaking restoration work and evaluation by experts. German orientalists too made extensive collections of similar treasures, even hacking out sections of murals, before the Chinese revolution of 1911 brought down the curtain on such depredations.

It is only fair to point out that the foreign explorers regarded themselves as saviours of irreplaceable material which was on the point of disintegration or of disappearing into the hands of tourist trade dealers, while they themselves received no rewards except kudos. Fortunately for the Chinese museums, such as that at Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang, Chinese archaeologists have in recent years turned up finds no less exciting than those of the earlier foreigners. The fact that the finds are all made along the Silk Road is attributable to the isolated desert conditions. Apart from Buddhist shrines in the sealed tombs of the owners. Silk was not itself produced in Turkestan, except later in very small quantities in Khotan. The means of producing it are said to have been introduced when a Chinese princess about to be married to the ruler of Khotan smuggled in silkworm eggs — she could not endure the thought of being deprived of ready access to silk for her gowns, so the legend says.

Those ancient scraps of silk, glowing undimmed in their museum cases around the world, as they glowed in long-forgotten tombs and shirnes, some of them for over 2000 years, tell their own story of the romance of the products of *bombyx mori* more eloquently than any poet can.

Rae Henson

Woven polychrome brocade of the Tang dynasty, patterned with birds and flowers



L.J. HARVEY AND HIS SCHOOL

In 1934, Moore in his *Story of Australian Art* commented 'Harvey has the modesty of some of the craftsmen of old, and consequently his influence on the art of Queensland has never been adequately recognised by the people of his own State.' William Moore's comment has remained pertinent until L. J. Harvey and his school became the subject for the Queensland Art Gallery's first major retrospective exhibition in its new premises in the Cultural Centre.

L.J. Harvey, 1871-1949, Small vase 1921, 11.1 x 7.5 cm. Private Collection

A woodcarver and sculptor of extensive talent, L. J. Harvey has exercised a great influence upon the visual arts in Queensland, especially in the craft area. He profoundly affected generations of local artists and craftsmen yet his greatest claim to fame is that he was the inspiration of the 'Harvey School' of pottery, easily the largest and most distinctive school of pottery in Australia. Harvey taught pottery from 1916 at the Central Technical College and upon his retirement in 1937 continued to teach at a private arts and crafts school he established at Horsham House, until his death in 1949. He provided basic training in pottery for more than a thousand students in this time.

Many of his students trot out the statement, 'You know everything was hand made' as if it was a positive benefit in itself. Hand-building, like wheelthrowing, is a means and not an end. (There could, for example, be a great deal of sense in throwing the shape and using it as the base for elaborately pierced pottery as Klytie Pate did.) Harvey, however, was opposed to the use of the wheel. He dismissed his students' enthusiasm for wheelthrowing. 'It would take you six months to learn to throw a saucer' was one of his pronouncements. He also believed that the unification of 'eye, hand and heart' which he sought in pottery could not be achieved with multiple wheel-thrown shapes. By 1918 he had discarded the potter's wheel

Exercise 19: Ida Martin, 1906-, Carved double-walled vase 1937, 26.5 x 17.5 cm. Collection: Queensland Art Gallery

which was a feature of his early classes and hand-building was the only method taught.

In his veneration of the handmade object, Harvey was seen in Queensland as heir to the traditions of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movements. Even in December 1938 a reporter could state, 'In these days of mechanical perfection with the use of hands being supplemented by the use of machines it is good to see one who sponsors the training of the hand and the eye to create beautiful things, still spreading his gospel . . .' The belief in integrity of workmanship was not opposed to industrial applications as William Morris' own designs for wallpapers and carpets attest. Nor did the Arts and Crafts movement have any quarrel with wheelthrowing as the craftsman was in direct contact with his medium. However, the standardised shapes and sizes being produced by local commercial potters led Harvey to reject the wheel in the belief that it led to facile reproduction. For him, the use of any mechanical device became inherently inferior to the handmade object.

An understanding of the L. J. Harvey school of pottery is impossible without an understanding of the methods by which he taught. By the 1930s Harvey's pottery course consisted of 20 exercises and he guided his students from the simplest brick building exercise to the complexity of double scraffito work. These exercises involved only brick, slab and pinch building and were designed to acquaint students with the possibilities and limitations of clay. It is interesting to note that Harvey did not teach the most basic form of hand-building — coil building — except at his children's classes in the 1940s.

Harvey's course of instruction developed as his own knowledge grew. By 1918 he had devised the first of the exercises to be used throughout the remainder of his career. This was the brick built tobacco jar. Miss Marjorie Sealy has in her possession an example of this type (with sloping sides dated 1918 and inscribed PEACE to commemorate the end of World War I).

By the mid 1920s the first ten exercises were defined and by 1930 the series of twenty exercises was finalised. This series took one year to complete. These exercises were:

1) brick built tobacco jar; 2) brick built honey jar; 3) concave sided vase; 4) potpourri jar; 5) slab vase; 6) tea set (teapot, sugar bowl, milk jug, teapot stand); 7) long necked vase; 8) hexagonal lidded box; 9) incised slab vase; 10) vase with slip decoration; 11) daisy vase; 12) two handled vase; 13) figure of eight sandwich dish; 14) vase with inlays; 15) four handled vase; 16) oval shaped vase on stand; 17) water bottle with slip decoration; 18) carved fruit bowl; 19) pierced double walled vase; 20) double scraffito decoration.

Harvey did not allow flexibility in the production of the first ten exercises, unless the student was as talented as Val McMaster or Agnes Barker. Each piece was made in the style and size dictated by Harvey and decorated with the paper patterns provided. The complexity of the pattern depended on Harvey's opinion of the skill of the student.

With the last ten exercises, Harvey allowed his students more freedom as by this time the less committed pupils had generally departed. As Harvey did not institute a series of blueprints, as he did with his modelling and wood carving exercises, the order of several of these exercises

Exercise 9: Ruth Myers, 1907-, Hexagonal vase 1924, 17 x 14 x 12 cm. Private Collection

may be open to question depending as it does on the memories of his students. The above list has met with their general approval.

Although the basic format of the series remained unchanged, slight modifications took place over a period. For example, the 1920s Exercise No. 9, with hexagonal sloped sides and incised decoration proved too complicated and was replaced during the 1930s with a square slab-built example in which the line of the vase was continued inward with additional slab work.

Harvey was a self-taught potter and while it is logical to assume that his hand-building exercises may have been derived from available publications, this does not appear to be the case. Harvey had in his own possession volumes such as C. F. Binns *The Potters' Craft* which merely mentioned the techniques he used so extensively: slab-building and the use of the template. The book was largely devoted to wheel throwing, slip casting and other more technical procedures.

Very few people were experimenting with ceramics in Queensland in the early decades of this century. Some of these may be mentioned.

Excercise 18: Lilian Pedersen, 1899-1983, Carved bowl 1936, 14.5 x 26 cm. Collection: Queensland Art Gallery

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Val McMaster 1913-1983, Dragon Vase c.1935-40, 29 x 21 x 17 cm. Private Collection

Martin Moroney was a stained glass maker who decorated locally produced white ceramic blanks. He possessed a small kiln for firing his painted pieces and also experimented without great success with ceramics. At the second exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society of Queensland in 1913 Mr. C. Rolandson exhibited a case of birds and lizards which were made of Queensland clays made and fired in Brisbane. Harvey may have been acquainted with Marian Munday who lived at Kangaroo Point and exhibited artistic pottery in the 1910 Royal National Association exhibition. (In that year she exhibited twenty-one items of pottery at the Arts and Crafts Society of New South Wales. From this the Art Gallery of New South Wales acquired the first piece of Australian pottery to enter a public collection.)

One must therefore assume that Harvey based the exercises on his own skill and experience as a modeller. He developed his system of hand-building and decoration to a complexity that has no parallel. This is his unique contribution to the development of ceramic techniques, and hence its importance in the exhibition 'L. J. Harvey and his school'. Once familiarity with the range of Harvey's exercises is developed, a high percentage of Harvey school ceramics can be readily identified.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Harvey school pottery is that it was indeed a school. All works produced by Harvey and his students were decorative, hand-built and used commercial majolica glazes. With very few exceptions, namely Mrs. Nosworthy and Val McMaster, there is no evidence of personal style. Some of Harvey's pupils produced individual works but as they did not pursue their development these works can only be viewed as eccentric.

Another important characteristic of Harvey school is that every piece was decorated. Harvey in his *Principles of Ornament* stated, 'Ornament is that which is added to adorn and makes objects beautiful and interesting, without detracting from their use.' Harvey also felt that 'Ornament should not weaken either the constructive appearance of an object and its form', thus the function of the handle of a jug, which fits the hand very comfortably, is improved by rendering it as a dragon. The contour of a fruit bowl is determined by the shape of an apple, then elaborately pierced to allow a free flow of air. The design principles of the 20th century, exemplified by the Bahaus in their idea of form following function, stopped at the point which for Harvey, was the beginning of beauty.

Harvey's style of decoration, particularly in the areas of piercing and double scraffito, became increasingly elaborate during the 1930s. The sources for decoration were principally conventionalised neo-renaissance motifs, inspired by Harvey's early career as a woodcarver, and to a lesser extent art nouveau.

Harvey's teaching exercises form the core of identifiable pieces but students also used templates to produce pieces which differed in the style of decoration specified in the exercise. The students also had access to other templates which were in use over a considerable period of time and, in addition, each student produced a vase decorated with fish, a sandwich box, a float bowl.

When students work together for long periods of time it is to be expected that they will be strongly influenced by other students' work. The wall pockets made by Sarah Bott and Mary Lawrence in 1935, for example, are almost identical. Harvey's most consistent potters (for periods of up to 25 years) were the women who came to his classes part-time, as a social outing or as relaxation from their jobs. These students had not taken the Design Course at the Central Technical College and were supplied with Harvey's designs which they then transferred to the pots. The students who attended the fulltime Design Course were given considerably more latitude in the decoration they used.

Occasionally new motifs suggested by either Harvey or one of his fulltime students were incorporated into the "school" style. A good example of this is the dragon vase by Val McMaster which is one of the finest pieces in the Harvey school. Lizards were one of Harvey's favourite motifs and they appear numerous times in his students' work but there are no dragons, not even in the motifs he used for carving in the mid 1930s. Val McMaster was inspired to make this vase through her love of the Orient and when it was shown it inspired emulation. There are at least eight other known dragon pieces.

Olive Moase 1895-1966, Covered jar 1936, 28 x 12 cm. Private Collection

From the first exhibition of works in 1916, mention was made of the use of Queensland clays and scraffito ceramics using Queensland clays became one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Harvey school. Harvey was continually experimenting with the coloured clays he discovered on his trips around Brisbane, and some of his students followed his lead. The most distinctive use of Queensland clays is seen in the use of double scraffito decoration. The usual procedure was to build a body of a stable clay such as the white Stone's clay, and use the various coloured clays as slips in double coats. It was a painstaking procedure to cut the clay through different levels to create a design of three colours. The most common clays and their

Exercise 1: Frances Dunbar 1899-, Tobacco jar 1926, 13.5 x 8.5 x 8.5 cm. Collection: Queensland Art Gallery

sources were: iron red — Redcliffe; light brown — Mt. Tambourine; ochre — Scarborough; creamy yellow — Sherwood; dark brown — Darra.

The double scraffito technique appears to have been suggested by a student — Florence Bland. A note in her vase dateable to 1927, asserts that it was the first vase made with this technique. There is no reason to doubt her. Harvey had been doing single scraffito work since 1918 but what appears to be his first double scraffito piece is dated 1928.

Although Harvey had a wide variety of glaze mixes at the Technical College and revealed the "mysteries" of glazing to his assistant teachers, it was a constant disappointment that he would not teach his students glazing. They had to depend on the bright glossy majolica colours available at the Stone's Pottery: cobalt blue, mulberry, plum, brown, sepia, green, red, pink, ochre, yellow and clear. Poorly applied and incorrect glazing was a source of irritation, but greater care was taken if the potter made a friend of the glazer, Mrs. Thams. In reaction to this, some of the potters like Florence Archer and Olive Moase virtually restricted their glazing to sepia. "Sepia with colour" is probably the most popular glaze on Harvey school ceramics. The use of scraffito in Queensland clays and a clear glaze was the only way that the potter could control the final effect.

A gas fired kiln had been installed at the Technical College by 1924 and Harvey used this exclusively. While this behaviour may appear proprietary, the small kiln could not have coped with the numbers of Harvey's students. Their pieces were bisque and glaze fired at Stone's Pottery, Coorparoo. The students' works were fitted in after the pottery's commercial wares had been stacked and occasionally the colours of the pots were burnt out by being in a hot spot. Although the kiln men were careful, hours of students' work could be destroyed by rough handling or faulty batches of clay.

Because of the difficulty in disposing of their wares, only the most dedicated of Harvey's students could consider acquiring kilns. Miss Mervyn Jones, the potter at the Art Craft Studio, built a coal fired kiln at the back of her parents' home "Merrilees" in Sherwood, in the late 1920s. She attempted to pick up hints on firing from books but her firing was very much a hit or miss procedure. Mrs. Nosworthy also had an oil fired kiln built as a trial effort by Evans Deakin at her home in Clayfield. Miss Isobel Scriven had a kiln in the 1920s; Agnes Barker, a small electric kiln at her studio around 1933 and Mrs. Buggy had a kiln at her home in Greenslopes in the 1940s. Such students were exceptional.

The Harvey method was carried on, with almost no alterations, by some of his students such as Sarah Ellen Bott and Muriel MacDiarmid. The only exception was Daisy Nosworthy who learned wheel throwing from Mr. Bill Sandison of Sandison's Pottery at Annerley and incorporated it into her course of instruction. Mrs. Norma Howes and Mrs. Marjorie Laycock were among his last students before Harvey's death, and along with Elvin Harvey taught at the crafts school at Horsham House for a period of fifteen months. They continued to teach during the 1950s and now give lessons in the Harvey method at Legacy, Brisbane. They are the last of his students teaching and both are in their early 70s.

With the advantage of hindsight, one can see why the Harvey school was eclipsed in the post-war period. There was a growth of interest in the simplicity of the Anglo-Japanese Leach school, and a resurgence of interest in wheel throwing occasioned by the advent of Hatton Beck at the Central Technical College. The College lacked an instructor who could carry on the dominant influence of Harvey. Students who had enrolled for the fulltime art course at the Central Technical College were the only ones allowed to do their own designing, and they had usually produced pottery for only a few years before taking the role of wife and mother.

Nonetheless the Harvey school of pottery, in the diversity of its decoration and techniques, provides a uniquely colourful exhibition and documents the contribution of L. J. Harvey and his talented students to the history of Australian craft.

Glenn Cooke
Curator, Queensland Art Gallery

Gloria Lovelock, Lemonade Jug, c.1930's, 18.5 x 15.3 x 8.5 cm. Private Collection

'Woolworth Tower', from original relief collage of the tower of the Woolworth Building, Manhattan, New York, 49 x 31 cm. Das clay, veneer, paint, fabric, hair, concrete and wire

Jeannie Baker

Central Park Triptych: 'Central Park 1' (composite dimensions 184.5 x 39 cm), fine greenery, grasses, fabric, paint, acetate, paper, cardboard, Das clay, wire, sisal, resin, pepper, earth and balsa wood

'Central Park 2'

Relief collages by Jeannie Baker

CITY IN THE SKY

After completing an intense two-year project based on relief collage images of Hyde Park, Sydney, Australian artist Jeannie Baker sought the stimulus of a total change of environment in which to explore new directions in her work. With the aid of a special project grant from the Crafts Board of the Australia Council she spent ten intrepid months in New York, planning, designing and collecting detailed information for a new multi-layered project which she has recently completed since her return to Australia. In the following account Jeannie describes her impressions and experiences of the largest and most competitive art scene in the world.

'House, 6th Street' (where Mike keeps his birds), 24.5 x 31 cm, Das clay, wire, tin, netting, grasses, paint, acetate and paper

WE arrived five hours late at Kennedy Airport, New York, 1 a.m. one humid October morning after over 20 groggy hours on a plane.

Our luggage was missing!

We wasted the next two hours fruitlessly chasing around an airport that was mostly closed. We phoned Manhattan. Our contact had gone out and left us no message and no keys to the Visual Arts Board studio.

Baggageless, footsore and dazed, we accepted the taxi which had been trailing us, making offers. A big yellow taxi with a big black driver. We asked for an address in Soho, Manhattan, near the studio.

No grand freeway from the airport! Endless lumpy, bumpy, gloomy streets and eventually a meccano set bridge: a mess of smooth, worn and dirty steel trusses.

More streets, more gloom . . . we have no sense of direction, only feelings of confusion and trepidation when the taxi stops at a dimly lit cobblestone intersection. The dark shapes of warehouse buildings decorated with loading dock landings, piles of garbage and fire escapes disappear in the late misty air.

Are we going to be mugged? We are told we've arrived.

We locate a doorway and ring a bell to be shortly rescued and drink tea with bread and Vegemite in Peter Burgess' refuge. Even later, Peter takes us to "The Studio". The handsome five-storey cast iron facade warehouse has its share of clutter, loading docks and garbage. We are led through an inappropriately pokey street doorway, past a sealed off lift and up five flights, (102 steps), of rickety, wooden stairs. The fifth flight disconcertingly showed signs of coming adrift. A great steel-lined sliding fire door was unbolted and heaved sideways.

Our new home!

'Central Park 3'

We switch on a light and step into the kitchen corner from where we peer into the gloom of a vast, empty warehouse space. More lights and the darkness fades. Over by the giant windows is a convertible sofa/bed, black and white television, cable reels for tables and other pieces of furniture all of which, we later learn, come from the scrounger's paradise on the streets below. In the morning we can see more of the character of the place, an array of dying pot plants and heaps of empty space.

Light pours through an elaborate skylight, the glass mostly painted black with sealant. The ceiling is festooned with stalactites where the bituminous roof leaks through when it melts every summer. The large cupboard directly behind the bed turns out to be yet another lift. A skewer has been jammed through the door to reduce the chance of being surprised while in bed. Whirrings and groanings of the lift working between the lower factory floors constantly emanate from this cupboard.

Beside this, a door through one of the windows opened to the chasm of Greene Street and a bombardment of truck and traffic noise. Our landing on the fire escape contains more potplants and from this fifth altitude, the steel ladder and landing seen close up is of disconcertingly frail proportions and construction.

The bathroom is a basic Soho solution with a false floor so the plumbing can run over the real floor. When we showered we had to remember not to stand on the plug hole. If the water got as high as an inch, an irate Mr. Zakow Przybilouski hammered on the fire door to tell us that the soapy water was pouring out of his ceiling in the middle of his living room which happened to be directly below. Zakow is part of the art scene too. He has a whole floor, with half a grand apartment and half a workshop where he practises as an art restorer.

The building, all five storeys, is timber. Timber floors, timber columns and plastered timber walls. The handsome facade is classical deep revealed "stonework" fabricated in 8 mm cast iron.

Soho (South of Houston Street) is an easily defined district of blocks of warehouse buildings almost all of this same height and facade. The warehouse spaces make ideal studio/living spaces.

When the artists first started moving into this area 15 years ago, it was a ghetto. The use artists made of the warehouse spaces contravened zoning and regulations. The artists took the risks: rigging their own plumbing, making the vast spaces livable and expending much energy to build adventurous, personalised interiors . . . all wasted if the authorities enforced the law.

As time passed, the authorities did nothing and showed they probably unofficially condoned the occupancy. Boutiques, restaurants, galleries, art supply shops, health food stores sprang up. So the competition increased and with it the rents. Money moved in . . . what fun . . . what potential! . . . A lawyer with a quarter acre apartment in Manhattan . . . fully interior-decorated and not just dressed up. Whole buildings could be built within the spaces, there being enough ceiling height for upstairs rooms, mezzanines and elaborate indoor arboretums . . . secret palaces hidden away in grotty buildings still with their pokey entrances and street garbage.

New York is a mosaic of distinct entities, communities, specialty service areas, good areas, bad unsafe areas, alive areas and dead areas with quite invisible and inappropriate boundaries. It is like a collection of independent centres, each with its complement of shops and services. A safe area might become an unsafe area across a street and for a few blocks and then it is safe again.

New York has to have the biggest art scene in the world; there are something close to 30,000 artists living in this centre. There are so many galleries in Manhattan it is impossible to see every exhibition even if you do nothing else . . . and if you did you would find the majority of the artwork is abstract. Most galleries seem to have a full stable: for an unknown artist, finding a gallery is tough. Galleries are generally very specialised and commercial. It is not uncommon for an interested gallery director to advise an artist something like this: — 'I like your work, but my buyers want 6′ × 4′ so enlarge your 2′ × 1′ and do them in oils, not watercolour and we might be able to help you'.

If you are reasonably good enough and want to show in New York, you can show at a "Vanity" gallery in which you will be expected to rent the space, pay all costs and 50% commission on sales. Or, you can go through the usual routine of ringing galleries for an appointment to leave a small portfolio. Many galleries will look at a set number of portfolios one morning each month and will take appointments for this only by telephone another morning of each month, but their telephone is usually permanently engaged for the whole morning!

I have a few contacts in New York who know the gallery scene very well and advised me to approach a short list of galleries. It is usual to have to wait several months for an appointment at the free established gallery consulting service, through which a well-respected woman will often provide a short list of those galleries that handle your kind of work and who might be interested in taking on new artists.

Through these channels, I decided to approach several galleries and then found myself in the position of having several galleries offer me a show. I chose what seemed to be the best deal.

Most of the New York artists I met were poor, often having a second job to survive. Much of the money they do earn, they spend on rent in order to stay in Manhattan. Consequently, a considerable artists' infrastructure of supportive organisations has developed. Free publications, artists' low cost medical and dental services, volunteer legal aid for poor artists, artists' libraries, artists' courses: 'How to write a resumé', 'How to succeed at the business of being an artist'. Advice services and libraries for grants, corporate and public funding, and so on, and so on.

It was winter by now with periods of snow. The snow does wonderful things to New York. The constant din of traffic and people is muted and the grot and grime is gone, buried under a blanket of whitest snow. The snow seems so inappropriate. How can a city such as this function with all its streets rendered impassable. The traffic slows, slides, bogs and stops. How? The answer was apparent before the snow came. How does New York function anyway? There are mind-boggling problems of worn out infrastructure, inadequate water supply, subway trains that break down in peak hours in a tunnel halfway under the East River, so packed with

people it would be impossible to fall over. A whole freeway to Downtown is simply abandoned when it became unsafe. Millions of illegal immigrants, with more arriving all the time in vast numbers, add to a population that is so disparate, so fragmented into tight alienating racial communities. Crime statistics are too frightening to contemplate.

How does New York function? It just does. It is a world in itself, where no other world exists. When something fails, the only choice is to persevere, start again, find another way and New York just grinds on . . . inevitably.

Three months goes very quickly in New York. We had decided to stay longer and after much effort found ourselves a place to move to when our time in "the studio" was up: an apartment in an avenue of pleasant "Brownstone" terrace houses in Brooklyn, a short subway ride from Manhattan. The apartment we took was a mess and needed much "fixing", but this suited us. The rent was much cheaper while we fulfilled a growing need to personalise our home environment and paint out the place with some cheer and freshness . . . but, we did miss living in the centre of Soho.

New York is the nucleus of much of our media. It is regarded by some as the centre of the fine art world. It is a big publishing centre. As my pieces are reproduced in book form, America possibly holds a big market for me.

I had recently completed an intense two year project based on Hyde Park, Sydney. I felt I needed the stimulus of a complete change of environment for a while. I hoped placing myself in an alien, vibrant environment would set me on a new path with my work.

I started with the New York subway, thinking I was going to make a project of that. As part of my research, I spent two weeks just riding the trains. I was determined to explore every line in order to know it as well as I could, apart from doing background research on its history. I always initially research my projects in this way, swamping myself, trying to see things from every angle before I decide what I want to make of it. I got totally depressed in this situation. I felt there wasn't enough point in spending a couple of

years on something that was going to bring me down. I then went searching for something more positive.

I first saw homing pigeons in flight from the window of an elevated train. The poetry of the changing patterns and shapes they formed as they flew together as a flock filled me with wonder. I got off the train at the nearest station and walked back to watch them from the street. A man stood at the very edge of the top of a towering building whistling to the birds to come for food. I was amazed by the potential precariousness of his situation and the beauty of the whole image.

Above: 'Mike' (detail), 24.5 x 31 cm, fabric, Das clay, feathers, hair, paper and paint

Right: 'Fighting for Food' (detail), 24.5 x 31 cm, feathers, paint and Das clay

Below: 'East 39th St.'. 33 x 39 cm, Das clay, sand, paper, paint, balsa wood, acetate, minced foam rubber and grasses

'Rooftop: Lower East Side' (where Mike keeps his birds), 49 x 31 cm

I started purposely seeking out these birds and their owners. I started at pet shops asking the shop assistants the names and addresses of people who kept flocks of doves. It was hard work; in such situations I found New Yorkers wary of strangers, but in this way I introduced myself to several breeders of homing pigeons.

Strangely, the owners I met and heard about were always male. My research mostly took me to the poorer parts of Manhattan where the birds were often kept on the rooftops of derelict buildings. I also met some wealthy breeders who kept beautiful showbirds above their uptown penthouse.

The pigeon building I used for the purposes of my work is a burnt out derelict building in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Mike, the black who keeps the birds, became one of the main characters in my story. Mike keeps a half-starved

dog on one storey of the building to stop anyone from stealing the birds.

At sunrise, one bitterly cold winter morning, I scaled the building with Mike. We could only climb so far up the sheer dangling ladder before we would have to walk across half burnt-out, rotted floorboards to the fire escape on the opposite side of the building, where it was safe enough to progress a little higher. Finally, our extremities quite numb with cold, we climbed to the top after a frightening situation where I thought the dog was going to attack me. I didn't climb this particular building again!

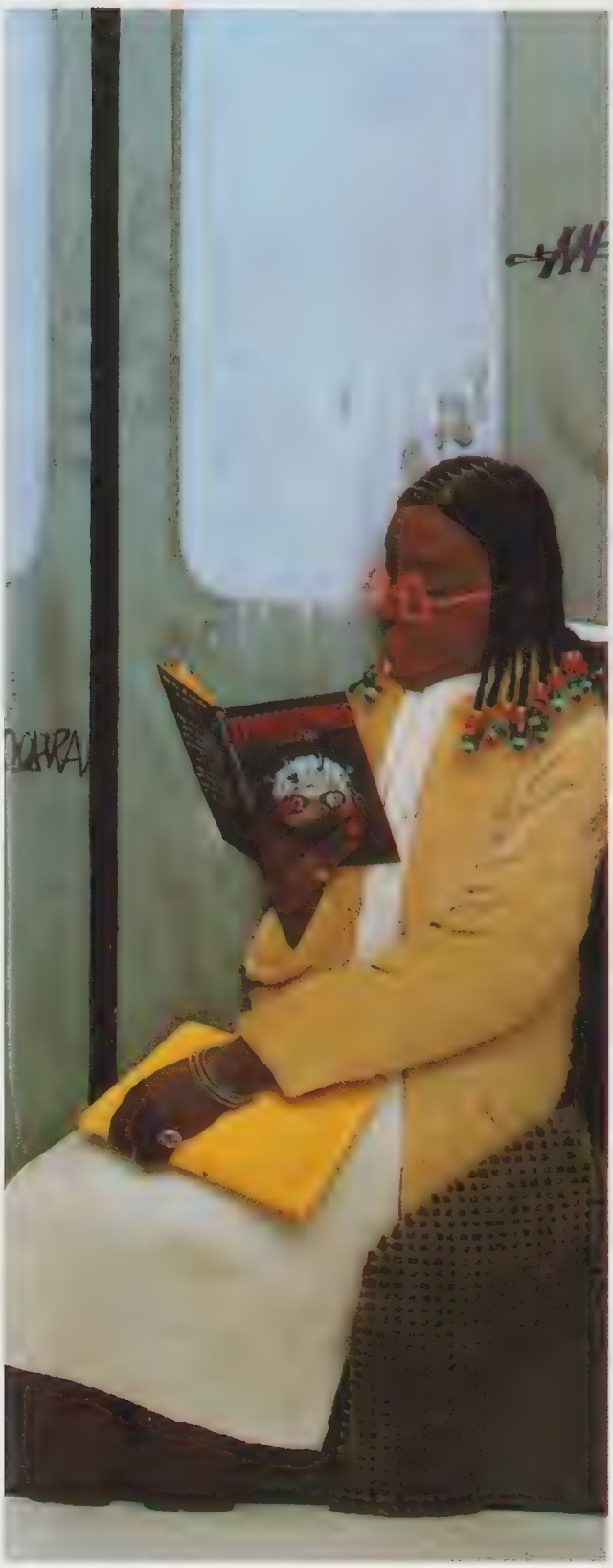
This research made me aware of the New York world at rooftop level. It is a world that mostly can't be seen from the street. I found it full of character, particularly in the poor areas. Children can't play in the street, it's too dangerous, so they use their rooftop as their playground. The rooftops are full of graffiti, washing, potplants and murals.

As a contrast, I found the elite regions of New York rooftops interesting in a completely different way. They often flaunt beautiful roofgardens and the tops of the roofs themselves can have an ethereal quality and decoration not unlike the tops of fairytale castles.

Gradually, I developed ideas for a picture book with words. I purposely tried to create images that would be strong enough to work in isolation but would have an added strength in working together. Much of the ten months I spent in New York were engrossed in working on the layouts and design details of this project.

Usually, when I am at the design stage, I do lots of drawing, but in this situation, I mostly took photographs. The images I have created are a combination of what I remembered and sketched out back at my studio, photographs and memories. My personal creative instincts work with my imagination to force these components into complete images.

As with much of my previous work, the basis of this work is documentary and social commentary. I worked to create pieces within this framework that could be linked together with the help of the words. I have rarely felt as restricted as I felt in New York and while I lived there I feel I gave myself more freedom than is usual for someone from my social background. I identified with the freedom of the homing pigeons as a contrast to the situation I found myself in and the general pressures of life at street level.



'Sunbathing', rooftop, Lower East Side, 33.5 x 39 cm, paint, fabric, hair, concrete and wire

Opposite: 'Subway', 49 x 31 cm, embroidery thread, hair, formica, aluminium rods, Das clay, leather, feathers and resin

'Uptown Rooftop', 24.5 x 31 cm

'Pigeon Coop', 49 x 31 cm

'Boy and Mother', 24.5 x 31 cm

The free flight of the birds, the poetry of the shapes they form as they fly together as a flock and their peaceful symbolism provide an interesting contrast to the often aggressive world at ground level. Yet in the image of the birds in their nesting boxes, there is a strong analogy between the birds and city dwellers. One particular dove strays and so becomes a vehicle whereby a number of rich and distinctive New York images can be woven into my storyline. This focal dove is white, the colour and image chosen for its associated symbolism of peace and hope as well as its ability to be identifiable.

In this way, through the flight of the dove, passing through, touching down on this place and that, I show a glimpse of the city . . . some of its contrasts, some of its ironies . . . some of its remarkable images (particularly rooftop images), with a special interest in the manner and scope for freedom in such a restrictive environment.

During the ten months I lived in New York, I was mostly engrossed by planning and designing this multi-layered project in order to collect the necessary details and information that would make it possible to complete the works in Sydney.

My New York pieces were also conceived to work as backgrounds in a seven-minute film. I planned to extend the work and superimpose doves and certain characters using relief animation techniques, relating the animated parts to the nature of the artwork.

Using sound and the camera to its fullest potential, I hoped to create an additional sense of movement and space. I worked for five months, developing a complex storyboard, getting together a crew, working out a budget, doing test filming, during which time I learnt a considerable amount.

It is the first direct experience I have had working on a personal project with a team. The working relationship with my potential partner in this venture did not work, leaving insufficient time to replace skills and expertise I needed to rely on.

I am committed with time by my exhibitions and following these there is a possibility that I will no longer have access to the artwork for filming. In my next project, I hope to be able to put into practice the skills I acquired during this period.

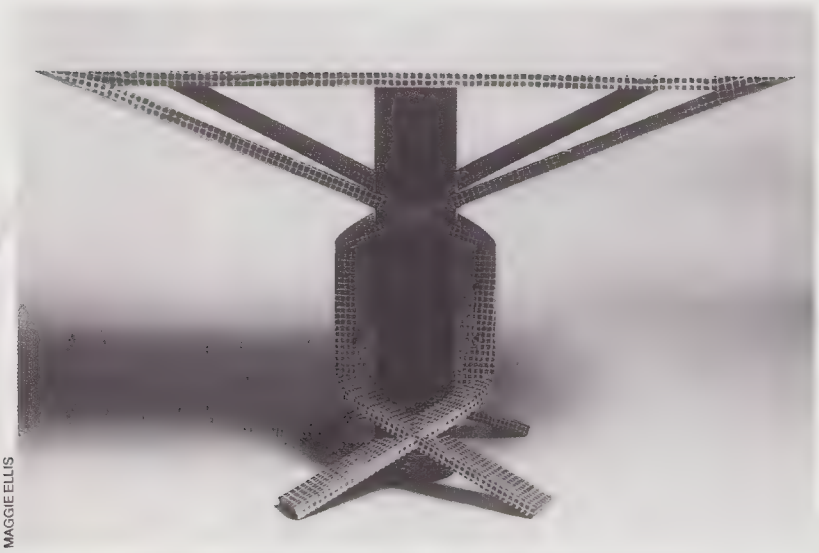
Another new challenge for me was to try and create a print with something of the relief nature of the original. Lithographic prints were made of the Woolworth Tower collage. I then worked with a hand-engraver to create a simplified relief replica of the lithographic image. The resulting engraving was pressed into each print, its imprint creating shallow relief. I have done a degree of hand work on each print in order to achieve a result I feel satisfied with.

The Crafts Board of the Australia Council assisted this project considerably by awarding me a special project grant 1982-83.

These collages and prints were exhibited at the Roslyn Oxley Gallery, Sydney, last September 8-24. Publishing details for the book, *City in the Sky* are still being negotiated.

I returned to New York in October 1983 under the auspices of the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council to take up another three month residency at their New York studio. Forum Gallery, Madison Avenue, New York, exhibited my works in November, 1983.

Jeannie Baker



MAGGIE ELLIS

Table in solid sycamore substructure with veneered maple top

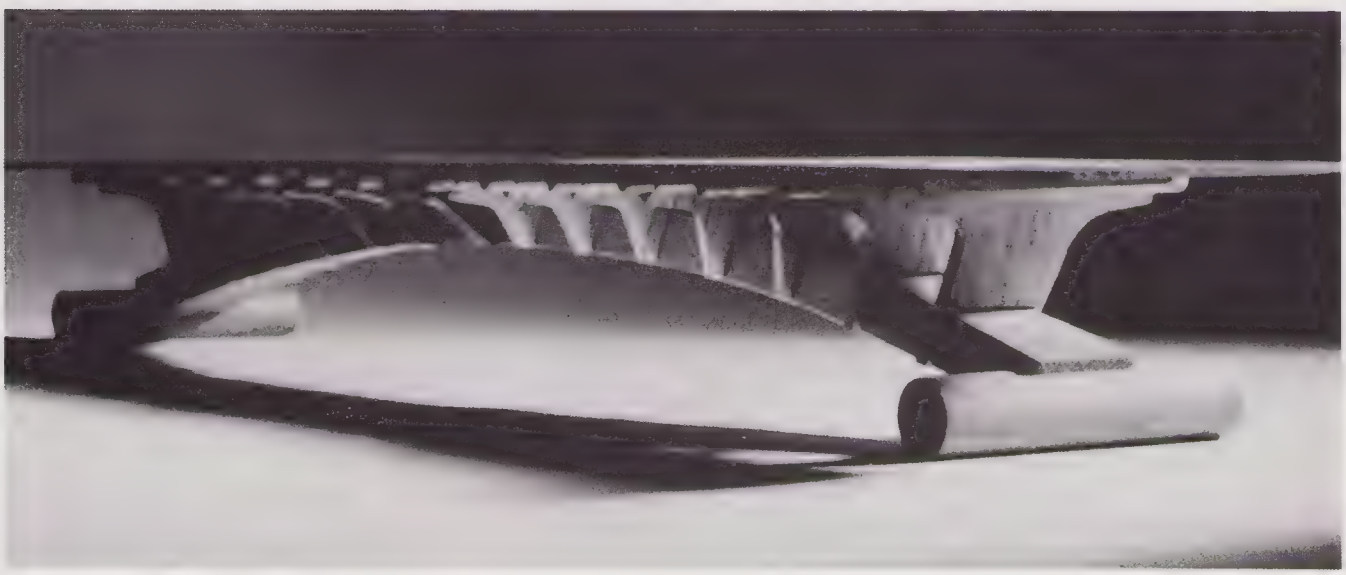
THE BAIER/ROSE APPROACH TO

DESIGNING IN FURNITURE

BAIER and Rose are doing some exciting things about people, spaces and furniture. Given half a chance, furniture can be much more than something to be sat on, tripped over and polished, and given the design skills of the Baier/Rose partnership, it can become a definitive element in the spaces people occupy.

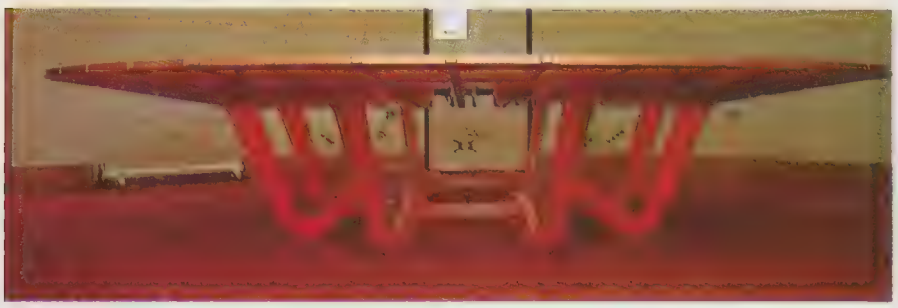
The extent to which living or working space becomes more than the sum of its containing walls depends on what is put inside it. That much is obvious. Less obvious is the process involved in creating furniture that will work — both visually and psychologically.

That is the business of Fred Baier and Chris Rose, two English designers who have formed a partnership to provide a broadly based design consultancy service. They aim to produce furniture which will not only suit their clients'

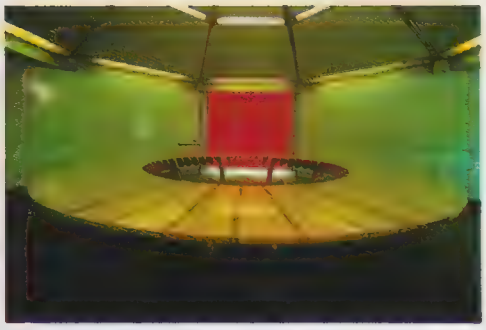


Twenty-seater refectory table in solid oak, 710 x 100 x 75 cm. Photo by Karen Norquay

Boardroom table commissioned by the Oxford Centre for Management Studies in conjunction with Ahrends Burton and Koraleck (Architects) as a result of a design competition by invitation. Photograph shows the cross bracing structure in stainless steel wire and tensioning devices



Side-view of the table installed in the boardroom



Over-view of boardroom table

Below: Bar stool in stained ply with wetsuit upholstery. Commissioned by the Crafts Council (UK) in conjunction with the Terry Farrell Partnership (Architects). Designed to set the tone of a coffee bar area at Waterloo Place, London

One of 10 chairs commissioned by Southern Arts (UK) for a touring exhibition. All sycamore with high gloss finish, height 55 cm. Photograph by Paul Carter

needs and the available space, but will look good while doing it.

The work of Baier and Rose covers a wide spectrum of design projects ranging from speculative pieces for gallery exhibitions to commissioned works for clients. The partnership had developed a particularly zestful approach to tackling commissioned works. This involves a close working relationship with the client, and intense 'visual research' to accumulate design information from a comprehensive range of disciplines. The client provides the reasons, the needs, the expectations, the doubts and the funds. The visual research provides the starting point, the design components, the technology, the visual tools. The designer then puts it all together.

Start with the client. He or she defines the problem to be solved, and employs the designer to solve it. Baier and Rose make a point of establishing close designer/client rapport to ensure an accurate exchange of information and to nurture the client's confidence. Chris Rose enjoys this initial groundwork which is crucial in establishing a clear idea of his client's needs.

Not all the discovery is on the part of the designer. The client himself may not know exactly what he wants or needs. In this situation Baier and Rose give the client substantial flexibility by offering him an 'approach' to designing rather than one particular style. They are therefore able to offer the client some basic principles which will then lead to a number of solutions from which he can choose. By emphasising approach rather than singular style, they are able to provide furniture which fulfils the client's needs and at the same time has freshness and design integrity. Visual research makes it work.

When Chris Rose speaks of visual research he is referring to the idea gathering process which stimulates initial designs. This information gathering collates those elements which will become the basic vocabulary of a particular project. Once this vocabulary is established, the

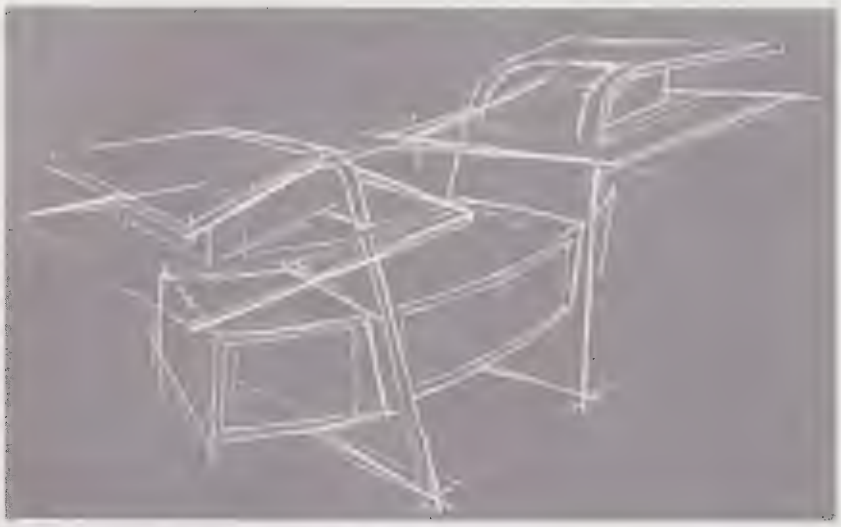
Table (nicknamed Star Wars Table) in sycamore veneer with stained sycamore inlay. Legs and superstructure in solid sycamore. Top 104 x 181.6 cm. Purchased from the Prescote Gallery for Birmingham City Museum by West Midland Arts

Above: Writing desk, structured in solid stained sycamore with sycamore veneer top, height 122.6 x 87 cm

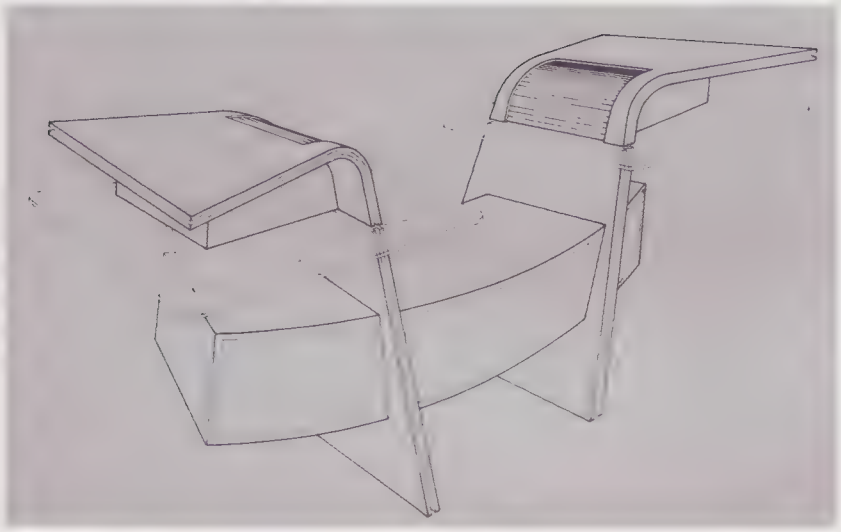
Right: A successful partnership in contemporary furniture design, Fred Baier (left) and Chris Rose who recently visited Australia on a lecture tour

Below: Coffee table in stained sycamore veneer with anodised aluminium pole.

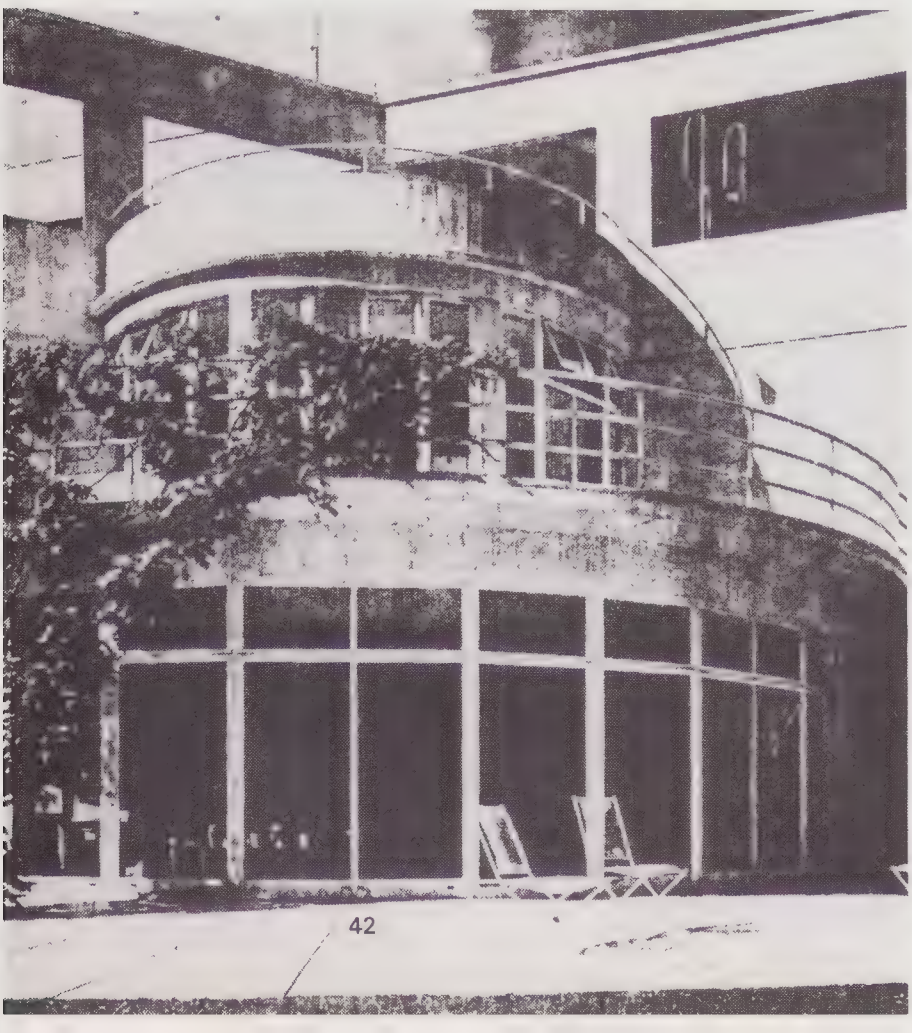
Photograph by Julian Bizart



Preliminary sketch of dressing table



Isometric working drawing from above sketch. Below: St Anne's Court, a large private house constructed in concrete to a circular design by Raymond McGrath in 1936

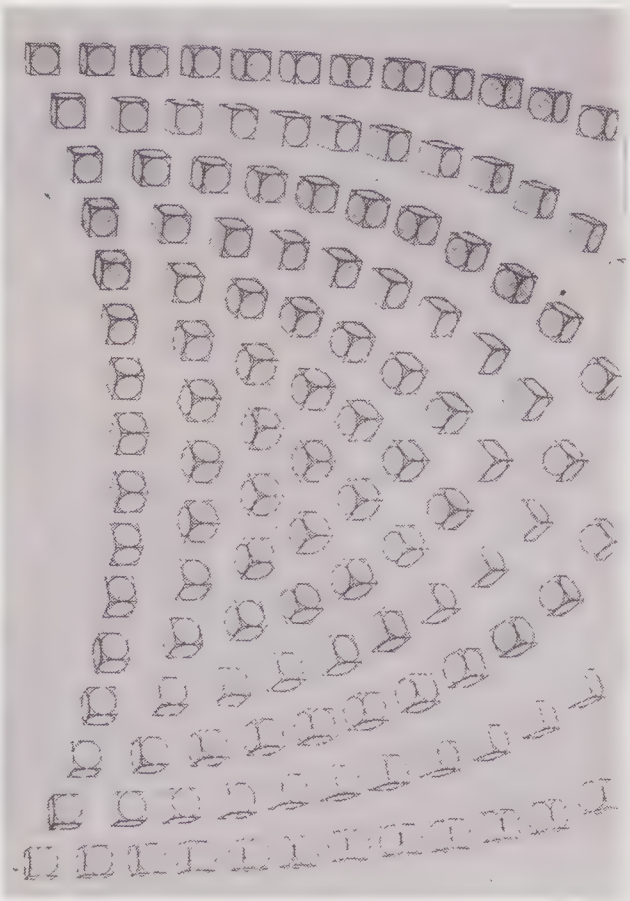


design is worked and reworked changing components but not the basic concept. Ideas are gathered from as wide a range of disciplines as necessary.

The Pembroke College table design is a good case in point. The table itself provides a wealth of visual clues which will give the astute viewer some idea of where the designers went to gather visual information. The piece was the Baier/Rose proposal for the high table at Pembroke College, Oxford. Initial facts: the table was to replace the original Victorian table and needed to seat a large number of people within a formal dining hall, the major feature of which was a magnificent timber roof structure. These facts formed the starting point for the visual research. As Chris Rose explains, given the extreme length of the table, the problems it posed were similar to those addressed in the construction of bridges, an area in which the Victorian engineers showed considerable skill and adventurous design. It was this structural approach which provided the basic vocabulary for the table.

A single laminated, gently arched oak beam forms the main supporting element in the table, from which radiating webs spread to support the top panel. Those webs produce a visual connection between the table and details of the truss system used in the hall itself.

If classifications are necessary, the table would not be recognised as what is commonly understood by the term contemporary design. It is specifically designed to a mood and an era. At the same time, Baier and Rose have escaped the visual boredom of reproducing period styles, and their approach has produced a design that possesses an affinity with its environment as well as a fresh contemporary feeling. The latter has been achieved in part by eliminating all the expected verticals and horizontals, another



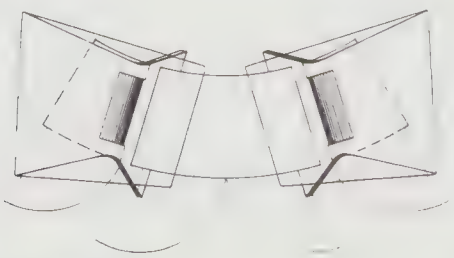
Visual aspects available from a three-dimensional computer graphic program designed by Paul McManus of Preston Polytechnic

result of applying a manufacturing method appropriate to the scale.

So much for the client and the visual research. What about the designers themselves? They must be able to add their own particular zest if their furniture is to satisfy a client's needs, fulfil a function, create a mood, empathise with its environment and still have something left over to give it visual integrity. The designer obviously must possess or have access to a wide range of skills. When two designers such as Baier and Rose form a partnership, the skills pool is even greater.

Fred Baier's training included a foundation course at Canterbury, a BA in Art and Design at Birmingham and an MA in furniture design at the Royal College of Art. He approaches furniture design as both creative artist and designer, and enjoys producing speculative works for galleries as well as working on commissioned projects.

Chris Rose studied at the Luton School of Art, gained a Diploma in Art and Design in Industrial Design Engineering in 1971 and a Master of Design, Royal College of Art, in Furniture and Interiors, in 1975. Prior to forming the partnership with Baier, Rose was involved in a variety of design work, including product design for a large corporation, specialist joinery and architectural work, reproduction of antiquities and various interior works for private clients. He prefers to work on client commissioned pieces.



Plan of dressing table

Computer drawing of bed console by Paul McManus of Preston Polytechnic

The two designers find they work well together collating and exchanging ideas to produce the final design. Getting ideas down in quick sketches or short phrases, dots, arrows, excited underlinings or scrubbing outs eventually results in a design which articulates the basic working vocabulary. Once this is established, the design is refined with details of proportion and finish.

The processes involved in designing furniture and the sort of information that that process will make use of will vary according to where the project lies on the spectrum between speculative work and client commissions. Client commissions involve the most complex processes, as the partnership's work on St Anne's Court shows.

Baier and Rose were initially commissioned to design a bedroom suite for St Anne's Court, a country house designed by Raymond McGrath in 1936. It was a fortunate commission, as the unusual format of the house and the client's quite

Dressing table, a component of the St Anne Suite in sycamore, burr ash and stained veneer. Built by Tim Wells. Photograph by Karen Norquay

Desk in avodirie veneer and macassar ebony. Built by Tim Wells. Below: Bedroom suite, St Anne's Court

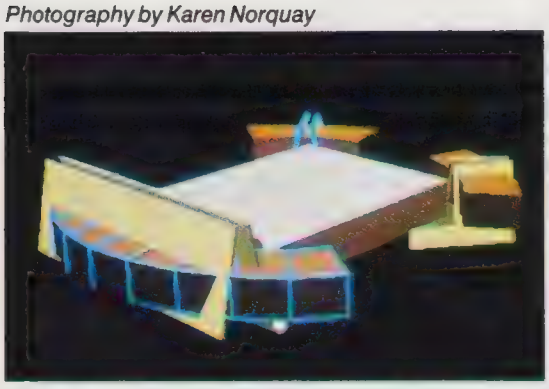
specific requirements would provide a reasonably complex puzzle.

The basic considerations were these. Firstly, the house itself. The plan of the house is based on a circular design — this meant that its interior spaces consisted of either circles or segments of circles and the only straight lines were verticals intersecting the curves. Concrete construction allowed flexibility in arranging the interior spaces, and as the house was situated in a large landscaped area, much use was made of glazing to provide comprehensive views. The basic structure of the house was a little cold and the mood it created was not one of domestic intimacy.

Secondly, the client's wishes were to be considered. The bedroom was to create that sense of intimacy lacking in the house itself. As far as style was concerned, reproduction 30s or ultra high tech was not desired.

In essence, the designers needed to create a piece of furniture that would be in visual harmony with the house, create a mood according to the client's wishes and which would also possess its own design excitement.

Photography by Karen Norquay



Contrast experiments with different illumination

Shape analysis and identifying hidden components

Wire frame with hidden lines removed

Surface texture and tone effects. Drawings by Paul McManus

Detail of bed-side reading light

Detail of remote control unit

Chris Rose explains that the bed's basic vocabulary grew from a consideration of the room's structure, and a set of rules was formed to provide the main design framework. As all the straight lines in the room were vertical, there would be less emphasis on vertical lines in the bed. This would make the bed an interesting visual departure from both what the house structure led the eye to expect and what in fact we normally find in bedroom furniture. Segments of circles intersecting with flat planes, therefore provided the bed's basic design vocabulary, which reflected the structure of the room it occupied. A number of electrical functions were incorporated, with some subtlety, so that these services could be controlled from the bedroom.

All the supporting structures were inclined flat panels, with curved panels enclosing bedside cabinet space. By highlighting the functional divisions in this way the designers have given the piece a strong visual coherence. (Baier and Rose have used this articulated function approach in other designs by distinguishing surfaces by colour.) The end result is a bed entirely in harmony with its surrounding space. It creates a mood for the client and has its own sculptural identity.

Consistent with their desire to create unique furniture without the restrictions imposed by a singular style, Baier and Rose explored different concepts when designing furniture for other rooms in the house. As each room has a different shape, function and mood, so the furniture in it should respond accordingly. The study, for example, is a wedge shaped room with a semi-circular recess and it is this basic segment shape which provides the desk's design vocabulary.

While physical space and intended function can act as design stimulii, they can also act as constraints which must be resolved during the designing process. Constraints, however, need not necessitate design compromises. Baier's design for a board room table commissioned by the Oxford Centre for Management Studies in conjunction with a group of architects is a good example of a design project subject to tight guidelines which in no way compromised the finished product.

Constraining factors determined that the table was to be non-directional, be sufficient to seat 16 people and able to be moved to a room reached via a 3.75 diameter spiral staircase. Sherlock Holmes would have loved the puzzle.

A circular design constructed in 8 segments solved both the access and non-directional problems. To this Baier added elements arising from his own fascination with engineering construction principles. The table top segments are braced to a central circular foundation by a simple web of stainless steel wire and tensioning devices. That the table captures the mood of the situation as well as the function is reflected in the fact that its design has since been used as a logo by the Centre.

While all furniture will eventually be used by somebody, Baier and Rose at times find themselves working in situations where the client is an as yet unknown quantity, as is the case with speculative pieces made for sale in a gallery, or when the 'client' is a large group of people with particular needs, such as those interested in making their own furniture and who are looking for suitable designs.

These do-it-yourself designs are also subject to client needs, although in this instance the designer must visualise what those needs will be. He must also consider the technology available to the do-it-yourself person.

Baier considered all these factors when designing a desk and chair set for *The Woodwork Book*, an English publication for the home wood worker. The desk is made in such a way that it can be built in either painted plywood or, for the more ambitious, solid/veneered construction. The whole project is made from joining flat sheets of wood, and can therefore be built using tools readily available to the home worker. Baier made one version using solid stained sycamore with a stained sycamore veneer top. At first glance the pink and green colours in this piece may seem a little random, though on closer inspection it is apparent that the colours articulate various functional activities. Supporting elements are pink, horizontal elements are green. While this colour code may not be immediately obvious to the uninitiated, it is one more element that adds to the logic or 'rightness' of the whole design. A person with no formal design training should be able to respond to this language without knowing the technical details behind it.

When work is purely speculative there is no client to provide the initial set of needs. In this case the designer can develop his own themes. However, in order to bring some discipline to the design, he must still prepare his own set of rules.

Fred Baier has explored a number of themes in his speculative work. Engineering disciplines have provided him with a rich source of imagery, seen in his table originally made for the Furniture Designer Craftsmen exhibition at the Royal College of Art in 1976. The table is now housed in the City of Leeds' Lotherton Hall Collection. Inspiration for this piece has come from working parts of machinery, the whole design being held together by a more general framework of geometric forms.

Engineering technology is only one source of inspiration for Baier and Rose. The range of stimulii varies from stylistic trends of previous centuries, to the infinite design possibilities of simple geometric forms.

The ideas emerge from quick sketches exploring potential ideas which are then consolidated into basic working drawings. Once this has been done, the idea needs to be reworked and re-defined until a finished drawing is produced, and this can be a time consuming and sometimes tedious process.

Baier and Rose are now exploring the computer as a tool in this refining process. Rose is quick to note that the computer does not replace design skills. It can only function once the designer has given it the basic design vocabulary from which to work, usually provided by data in simple form about layout, components or constraints.

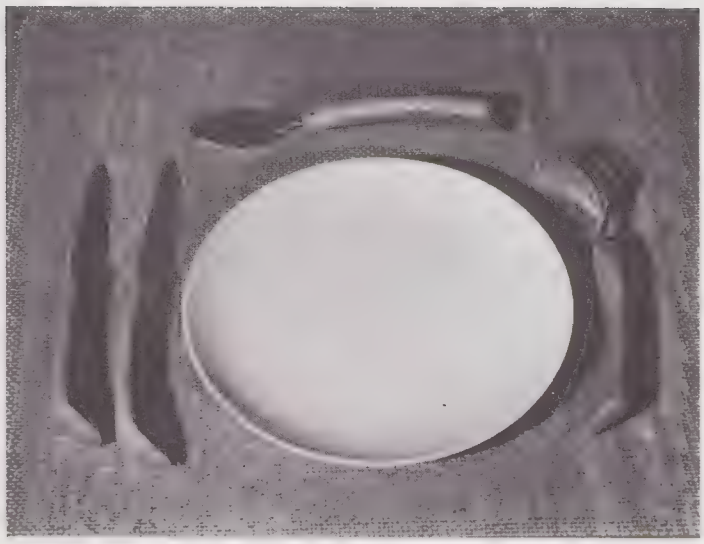
From such basic data a computer can then be used to rework the design when, for example, the proportions need to be altered, the dimensions need to be established in various formats, when colours need to be compared or when volumes or other quantities need to be calculated. Computer technology makes it possible for the designer to produce working drawings, three dimensional representations, coloured images, design information in tabulated form and, most importantly, to cross reference all this information very quickly.

These operations give the designer maximum flexibility in reworking and refining his ideas. Effects of light sources on colours and shapes can be examined, the relationship of furniture to interior utility services can be easily assessed, the effects that one design alteration would make on

Continued on page 109

Photography by David Barratt

First Prize entry by John Smith. Scale model of counter/servery and stool, pine and leather



Huon pine handled cutlery by Robin Green. Photography by David Barratt, Launceston

RESTAURANT/KIOSK FURNITURE DESIGNS

IN early 1982, Mr Terry Aulich, Tasmanian Minister for the Arts, suggested that funding be made available for a Restaurant/Kiosk Furniture Design Competition. Since the suggestion was made, there has been a change of Government but Mr Max Bingham continued to endorse the concept, and a total of 37 entries were received by March, 1983.

The competition was organised by the Crafts Council of Tasmania and the June opening was chosen so that Dr. Tapio Perianen, managing director of the Finnish Society for Craft and Design, would be available as chief judge. He was joined by Mr Robert Blacklow, a lecturer at the Hobart Technical College, and Mr Phillippe Vauxelle, assistant manager of the Launceston Federal Hotel Casino.

The aims of the competition were fourfold: to promote development of an arts based industry by identifying good local design capable of manufacture in Tasmania on a commercial basis; to display the entries to the general public; to act as an introductory point for the designer/producer; to facilitate sales where the designer wishes to sell individual pieces outright.

The judging criteria were as follows:

(a) The item must be aesthetically pleasing and functional in nature.

(b) The item must have the potential for manufacture and marketing in Tasmania.

Work was submitted in various forms, including prototypes, models and drawings.

The winners were: John Smith, $800 award; Richard Sands, $400 award; Ross Straker, $400 award; and Phillip Hillsdon, $400 award.

Educated in the UK, Bachelor of Art (Furniture Design), John Smith has been a designer/educator in Tasmania since 1970 and currently leads the Wood Skills Course at the School of Art, University of Tasmania. His design approach incorporates an interest in juxtaposing different materials and colour with wood in furniture with a relatively modular aesthetic, utilising geometric forms.

Richard Sands is self taught, and the winning furniture was the first competitive work he has undertaken. Phillip Hillsdon works for the Department of Industrial Development, and the prototypes displayed reflect an attempt to develop a range of utilitarian furniture which, with simple changes in surface finishes, would be of use in a wide variety of food-service establishments. Ross Straker, a student in the Woods Skills Course at the School of Art, University of Tasmania, stated that he had a personal ambition to prove that art and design when applied to any area of craft could only be beneficial.

Dr. Perianen, managing director of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design, made the following remarks regarding the judging of the competition: Why do we go to restaurants and kiosks? Certainly not only to satisfy the feeling of hunger and avoid cooking for ourselves. But mostly to eat and drink with a friend or group of friends, in an interesting atmosphere and different environment, to have a feast or dance or to listen to music, or simply to enjoy oneself. It happens in all kinds of situations, occasions, times, on different levels of quality guided by different wishes and expectations, tastes, and ideas.

From the physical point of view, a chair and a table are horizontal surfaces at ergonomical heights to sit on and to do different kinds of things on. From the quantitive point of view they are among the most numerous elements in our environment. Almost every single room has several chairs and tables. The human viewpoint brings us to the functions, individual social values, aesthetics and the ways of production which define the quality of furniture.

From these viewpoints, the result of the Furniture Design Competition for restaurants and kiosks organised by the Crafts Council of Tasmania was impressive. It showed the wide range of possibilities in solving the manifold problems of the field in question. Aesthetically the 37 entries included examples of rustic, conservative,

Hexagonal table in celery top pine and blackwood by Andrew Peploe

Laminated blackwood and suede chair by Pat Williams. Left: Celery top pine chair by Tim Levis. Right: Back detail of Pat Williams' chair. Below: Celery top pine and leather table by Guy Parker

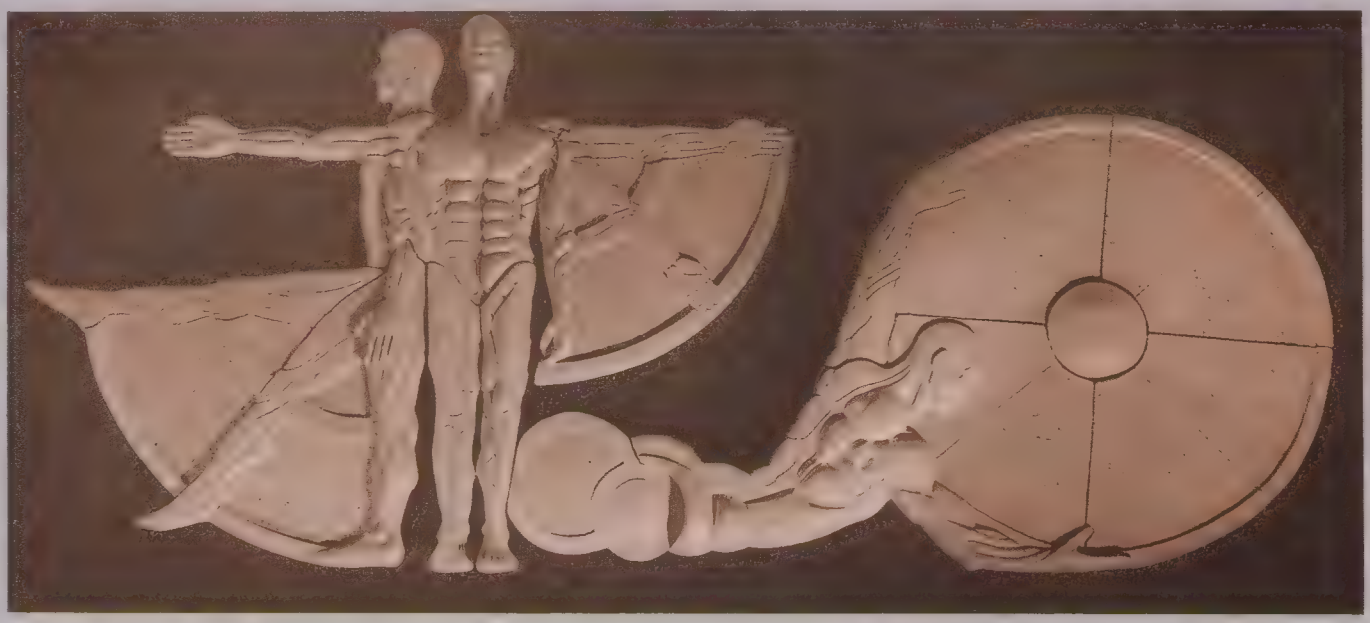
contemporary, experimental, sculptural, constructivist, romantic and exotic design and some inspired by a definite historical style. Functionally, many of the proposals were good but some had weaknesses or real faults. The legs of the tables were in the way when sitting, the ends of the table-tops were too round, creating danger for high wine glasses especially when the tables were put together. Some chairs were dangerous when leaning back and some of them were ergonomically wrong. Technically the best examples presented high constructionist knowledge. The general skill in woodwork in Tasmania seems to be of very high standard. Joints particularly and the finishing of the surfaces are beautiful. Some of the proposals were intended to be hand-made, but there were good examples for mass-production as well as for the more limited semi-industrial way of production.

Because of the standard and variety of the entries, the jury decided to give one first prize and three equal second prizes. The members of the jury agreed unanimously about the winner, John Smith. His prototype is elegant and functional. By changing colours and material on the tabletop and chair, many possibilities are created to suit different atmospheres. The coloured stripe on the legs is an interesting ornament of today.

The proposal of Ross Straker is a fine example of how to use local materials, and take profit from their natural beauty. His chairs can be produced only by handwork but as such they represent exclusive taste and high appreciation of the values of quality. Phillip Hillsdon has chosen a completely opposite method. His table and chairs are puristic, simplified to the extreme but with a good understanding of materials, structures and production processes. They are designed for industrial mass-production and to be used in low-priced kiosks. The table and chairs designed by Richard Sands are good examples of traditional furniture realised in a sympathetic personal way. The somewhat clumsy forms create a home-like, soft atmosphere.

In short, there was much skill, knowledge and imagination in the entries. Above all: Tasmania's design potential is at the disposal of industry as well as the public.

Janet Morice
Executive Officer, Crafts Council of Tasmania



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'DIRECTIONS'

An exhibition of work by students and staff of the Department of Ceramic Design at Chisholm Institute. It includes the work of professional people, and young designers involved in studio and architectural ceramics, glass and concrete.

Photography by Michael Richards and Peter Taylor

IN 1982, Caulfield Institute of Technology amalgamated with the State College of Victoria at Frankston and the name 'Chisholm' was substituted. Such a merger presented obvious difficulties of organisation since the two institutions are 40 kilometres apart. Far less apparent than the problems were the advantages that have since accrued. Students entering the courses in Ceramic Design have the choice of two campuses, one close to the city and the other in a bayside setting and offering accommodation to country students. Each has developed its own special character and each has contributed something worthwhile to the other.

'Directions' was first shown in London during October 1982. It included the work of more than fifty students and seventeen members of staff so that it was representative of the skills of both professionals and young designers all of whom were directly involved with the Department of Ceramic Design at the Institute. It would be apparent to anyone taking a critical interest in the exhibition that teachers and students alike had been encouraged to work in many different directions. The traditional medium of clay is never neglected but the students use glass and concrete as well. Towards the end of their course, they specialise in the single medium of their choice. An exhibition such as 'Directions' will always have its critics and no doubt exhibiting the work of aspiring artists has its attendant dangers. However, these seem to be counterbalanced by distinct advantages. For

Alan Thomas (staff). Lidded containers, brass, silver, titanium and resin

one thing, it encourages a very real respect between the student body and the staff, each for the other. It also leads to a greater degree of creativity because it demonstrates the many directions that artistic skill may take. The students learn to appreciate work that is very different from their own. Training in the use of materials and equipment is one thing, and is undoubtedly essential, but over and above that is the importance of design, a fusion of concepts, skills and techniques. It is possible for mere dexterity, like perfection, to rob a work of vitality so that it becomes 'faultily faultness, splendidly null'. Chisholm does not boast that it can turn out finished artists and designers, neither was the exhibition ever intended to display the work of geniuses. The idea that inspired it was, rather, the fostering of a union between the individual and his chosen materials and, perhaps above all else, an awareness of design. If 'Directions' suggested this identity and this recognition,

Gary Cleaves (4th Year). Totem forms black-fired burnished porcelain combined with worn and polished metal

Paul Davis (staff). Large bowl with incised decoration achieved by overglaze sponge printing

Michelle Lynch (2nd Year). Porcelain bowls with blushes of copper-red glaze

Philip Creed (4th Year). Primitive-lined ceramic forms on aluminium base

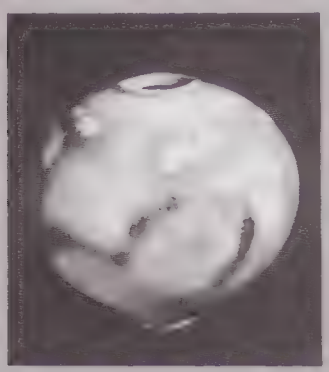
then it was worthwhile.
Whilst the Department of Ceramic Design is deeply concerned with the education of potential artists and designers, the sense of obligation does not stop there. It makes every effort to launch those it educates and exhibitions help materially in this respect. Certainly not all students have the innate talents that ensure success but even originality can be developed to a surprising degree and mastery of techniques and skills becomes the source of growing confidence and deep personal satisfaction. The production of well-crafted functional pieces is also important and can meet on-going community needs.
Ceramics has another and even more vital function. Western society seems to have reached the end of so many things. The cry of 'Work more, produce more' has proven futile — and those on the dole could add their own bitter comment. Especially among young

Diane Ripper (3rd Year). Group of lidded gumnut boxes in porcelain

Michael Chanter (4th Year), 'Warriors'. Slab pots finished with matt glaze and bronze lustre

Michael Chanter (4th Year), 'Space Warriors', unique moulded sculptures in white porcelain

Josef Bauer (staff), Exhibited sculptures in coloured glass, [illegible] and glazed stoneware



Paul Davis (staff), 'Blossom Pot', wax resist decoration and air-brushed oxides and glazes

people, work seems to be endured rather than enjoyed. There is too much emphasis on the producer-consumer concept of man and what is needed is a means of self-expression and fulfilment in day-to-day living. This may sound idealistic and impractical but we have not tried it and most other attempts seem to have ended in failure. There is something primitive and universal about ceramics. It has been the art of mankind down the ages and it communicates with many, perhaps more directly than any other art form. Hand-crafted work takes on a new value that is nevertheless not beyond the possibility of private ownership. Professor Boyden of the Australian National University writes of the optimum needs of human beings, needs usually met in primitive societies but largely lost to modern man. He heads his list with 'opportunities for personal, creative behaviour involving the exercise of learned manual skills'. If, as is often claimed, leisure is the biggest growth industry in Western societies, then all forms of creative leisure must be emphasised and, in-so-far as 'Directions' has challenged, informed or pleased, it has played some part, however small, in this wider role.

Some may ask, 'Why go overseas?' Last year, with the assistance of the Premier's Department, the exhibition was taken to Victoria House, London, where it was opened by Sir Zelman Cowen, the former Governor-General of Australia. In his address, he stressed the significance of the undertaking. He thought it important to exhibit overseas the work of young Australians, bringing to the attention of those who belong to much older cultures their level of craftsmanship in clay, glass and concrete. He felt that the mounting of the exhibition in London gave rise to the hope that such ventures would lead to an exchange of work between Australian colleges and those in other parts of the world. Already, the Darmsdadt Museum has invited

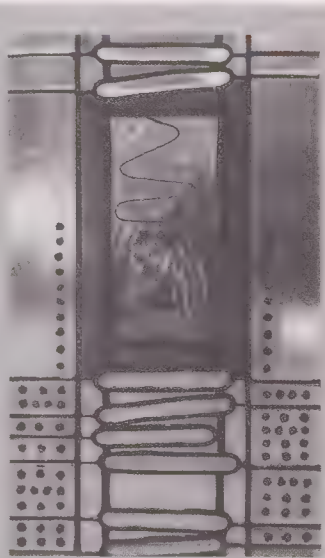
Siân Adnam (4th Year). 'Tree Form', terracotta clay stained with manganese dioxide

Paul Davis (staff). Plate with calcium matt-glaze and brushed oxide decoration

Garry Odgers (4th Year). Assembled stoneware goblets finished with satin glaze

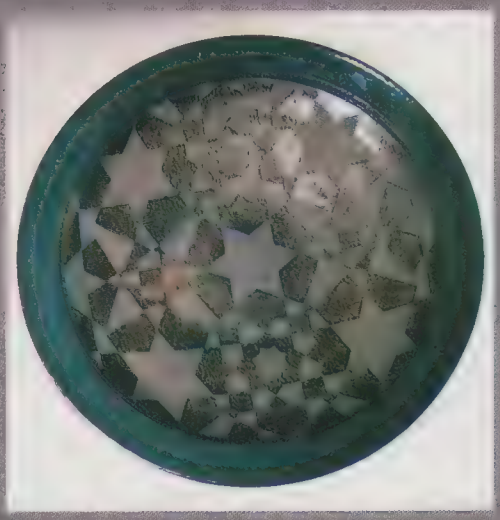
Josef Szirer (staff). Stoneware bowl with barium matt-glaze and [illegible] decoration

Chisholm to send an exhibition of glass to Germany at the end of 1984.
It is true that the London exhibition was very well received by the public and Victorian visitors expressed surprise and warm appreciation. Educators and school groups, too, were impressed by the wide variety of work and particularly by the inclusion of glass and concrete. However, others were less ready to accept such an extension of ceramics. The editors of *Ceramic Review*, were very reluctant to consider glass and concrete as ceramic materials. In fact, only minimal interest was shown by craft journalists in general — and this included those contributing to *Crafts*, the magazine of the Crafts Council. On a more positive note, enthusiastic students from the Royal College of Art undertook to shoot a video of the exhibition and there were other unexpected consequences. For instance, a skilled glass-blower from the Isle of Wight, who was impressed by what he saw, is now a member of staff at Chisholm.
In Australian, 'Directions' has been shown at five very different locations in a deliberate effort to interest a wider range of people. At each location, the emphasis was on a different but characteristic aspect of the work.
At Georges, a retail store in Collins Street, Melbourne, a display team provided two extensive cloth walls, brightly illuminated, so that more than twenty panels of flat glass could be effectively displayed.
At the Albury Regional Art Centre, the exhibition was supplemented by the work of two Graduate Diploma students. Ray Taylor used one wing of the gallery to display ten large pieces of organic sculpture in earthenware. Bronwyn Hughes used one wall of the courtyard to mount her eight-metre water-wall in terra-cotta. She was commissioned by the trustees of the centre to design and make this high-relief wall.
Concrete panels and sculptures were



Anita Burum (3rd Year). Fused and laminated glass

Josef Sziner (staff). Vase, stoneware with slip decoration



Chris Myers (staff). Platter, satin glazed stoneware with sand-blasted decoration

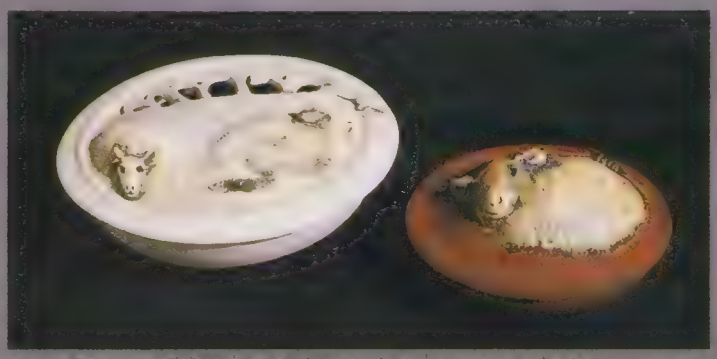
Gaylene Allen (3rd Year). 'Australiana'. Window in painted glass

Terrie Fraser (4th Year). Stamped plaque, stoneware, crackle glaze

Klaus Zeimer (staff). '1st issue'. Fused and laminated glass, 60 x 40 cm

Rick Price (4th Year). Shell-form stoneware vases, barium matt-glaze

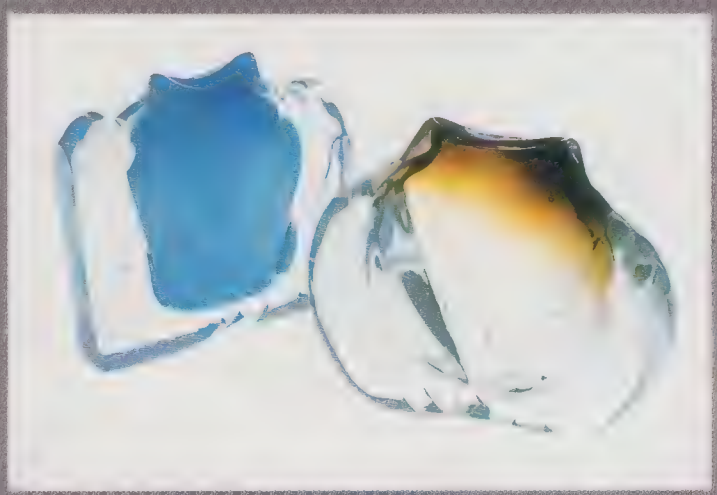
Diane Ripper (4th Year). Slab-pot, coloured slip decoration



Jackie Thomas (3rd Year). Jewel boxes in porcelain and stoneware with Australian pastoral scenes

Madine Delaney (4th Year). Hand-blown bowls with pinch decorated rims

Beryl Manzoni and John Somes (staff). Decanter and matching glasses. Designed by B. Manzoni, blown by J. Somes



Sue Browning (4th Year). Free-form slab vases accented with coloured glass

Neil McKenzie (5th Year). Blown and sprayed forms

prominent in the Exhibition Hall at the Sydney Opera House. These were meant to demonstrate that concrete is not necessarily harsh and drab but will lend itself to the use of various colours and finishes in a wide range of architectural environments. At the same time, it can be used to fashion delicate art pieces on quite a small scale. Visitors to the exhibition were also given the opportunity of watching videos of staff and students at work with different mediums in the specialised studios of the college.

The McClelland Gallery at Langwarrin, Victoria, was another chosen site. The gallery is an important art centre for the Mornington Peninsula and is close to the Frankston Campus. Here, a specially designed mobile glass unit was set up in the beautiful gardens surrounding the gallery. This made it possible for visitors to see demonstrations of the techniques and skills used in producing some glass pieces similar to those on display.

Josef Szirer (staff). Trinket boxes in translucent porcelain, slip decoration

When the exhibition reached the Caulfield City Arts Centre, the outdoor demonstrations were of raku and primitive firing. Indoors, visitors were able to watch audio-visual presentations of three large scale commissions undertaken by students of architectural ceramics, concrete and flat glass. Such commissions are the final qualification for the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Ceramic Design).

An exhibition is a means of personal fulfilment when the craftsman sees his concept in a substantial form that can be shared with others. This is not to suggest an end to development, or even the direction of development, for education is a continuity. It is merely a pause for some degree of satisfaction and an opportunity for self-evaluation. There is his piece of work and whether it is small or large is of no matter. It is an expression of his essential self and, because of this, it should be worthily presented.

It is very difficult to assess the value of an exhibition but it cannot be lightly dismissed if it inspires an occasional viewer, awakens interest in techniques or encourages faith in Australian talent. It has then achieved its highest purposes.

Lindsay Anderson
Head of Ceramic Design,
Chisholm Institute of
Technology.

MICHAEL CHANTER

'The recurring theme of my work —faces with closed eyes— reflects my search for humility and understanding in a world puffed up with pride and folly.'

Michael Chanter, looking upon the head as the focus of the human body, finds it a very powerful image. As a student, he was happy to begin with a mould-produced head. It was what he did with this basic form that was so innovative. Sometimes he used sprig-modelling. Again, he would make impressions in the clay with any small implement that came to hand. His heads are often severe yet oddly serene and belong to a world less disturbed than ours. He used to work almost exclusively in stoneware and porcelain, now he chooses white pottery clay and decorates with under glaze colours and lustres.

'In the leaf-fringed legend pictured on an ancient urn, Keats saw truth expressed as perfect beauty. As a ceramic artist, I try to convey truth as I perceive it through the shaping and decoration of clay.'

Paul Davis has not allowed eight years of teaching to dampen his enthusiasm or hinder his search for truth. Photography and black and white sketches often supply the starting point of an impression made permanent in clay and glaze. His more recent works are in stoneware and porcelain with strong emphasis on brush work decoration. He has sought to capture the mood and atmosphere of Australian landscapes, particularly under seasonal changes. In his work, techniques are never allowed to dominate but the idea that inspired each individual creation remains its distinctive characteristic.

MARK GRIMLEY

'I am intensely interested in physical form and this often dominates my work.'

Mark Grimley, a fourth year student specialising in Concrete Studies has recently completed a mural which was commissioned by the Footscray Institute of Technology. It has been erected at second-floor level on the outside of the C.A. Hoadley Sports Building. It weighs 650 kilograms and is supported by a frame of heavy gauge steel tubing. The design includes three classical figures symbolising achievement in sports. A white cement and marble chip mixture with a brown cast was chosen in order to provide a contrast to the grey walls. The mural has been named "Strength and Mobility'.

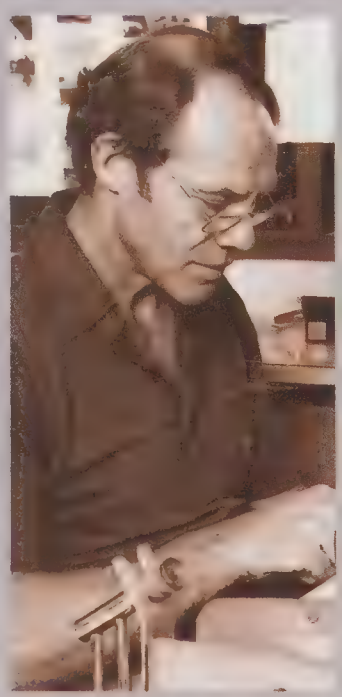
'In my ceramics I try to create strength through simplicity.'

Gary Odgers completed his degree at Chisholm and is now self-employed but working in Josef Szirer's studio. At present he is concentrating on a range of domestic ware decorated in pale blue brush work on satin-white glaze. His stoneware is often combined with turned blackwood. Many individual pieces are based on semi-sculptural forms inspired by armoured warriors and the weaponry of ancient times.

JOSEF SZIRER

'All facets of pottery fascinate me but, above all, I find it constantly challenging...constantly revealing.'

Josef Szirer comes from Hungary and has been on the staff of Chisholm since 1975. He is represented in many public and private collections both in Australia and abroad. His work is constantly developing in some different direction as he faces with imagination and skill some new challenge. At present, he is particularly interested in the translucent qualities of porcelain and is experimenting with forms that show these to best advantage. Chisholm owes much to his great gift of encouraging in his students the same original approach.



ALAN THOMAS

'In the role of educator I see myself as a catalyst bringing together the student's creative talent and the materials available to the silversmith and jeweller.'

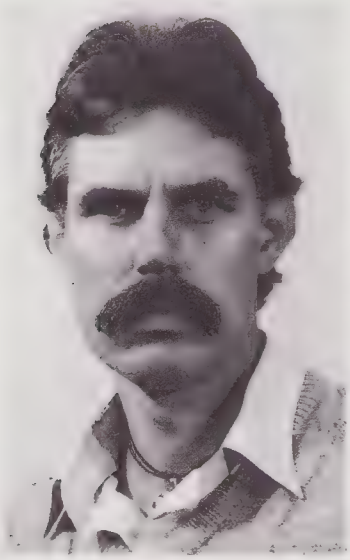
Alan Thomas is an experienced craftsman whose students must serve a rigorous apprenticeship in mastering techniques and achieving consistency. He believes that jewellery should reflect the personality of the wearer and he strives towards that ideal. The jewel boxes he makes bespeak precision whilst the decoration is often a sensitive reflection of the organic nature of the Australian landscape, especially in the areas along the Hawkesbury and Tidal rivers. The materials he uses include silver, silverplate, polyester resin, brass and titanium.

The photographs and colour plates in this supplement were sponsored by
Kodak (Australasia) Pty. Ltd.

The coloured photographs in this supplement were sponsored by Kodak (Australasia) Pty. Ltd.

The pottery of PHILLIP McCONNELL

Presented in conjunction with Proton Industries Pty. Ltd.



Phillip McConnell

THE exhibition of ceramics displayed in the David Jones Gallery in June this year was the most recent of a series of quality exhibitions put together in the past 15 years or so by the potter, Phillip McConnell. The word "quality" is stressed and the sense of exhibition is emphasised because the work is very consciously produced, selected and presented to aim at the discerning collector. This latest exhibition was completely in character with that aim.

Installation shots of the exhibition show that gallery and exhibitor had combined in planning and presentation to provide a thoughtful and sensitive display of fine ware with appropriate space, setting and lighting. The impressive range of pots inspired and informed by Eastern tradition looked especially well in this particular exhibition because they were shown in a setting which should serve as an example for other galleries and exhibitors. Without any sense of drama or oversell the pots seemed remarkably at home and looking their best on antique Spanish furniture — tables and sideboards of great style.

The setting was no mere accident but had been arranged carefully by artist and gallery to present the ware to its best advantage. Space provided was adequate to consider the 59 pottery pieces individually, but there were sufficient items not to be swamped either by the space or by the impressive oak and walnut furniture on which they stood. The pots were also exhibited with their individual cedar boxes and descriptive certificates signed by the artist. The pots, their packing and presentation all served to emphasise the essential seriousness with which Phillip McConnell treats his work.

While to many potters the simple production of pots is a sufficient aim in itself, to Phillip McConnell that is only one part of the process which involved preparation and promotion as well as the making. In this way a concern for the exhibition is simply but importantly a demonstration of the maker's own regard for his product, and as may be apparent, this is too often overlooked by potters who allow their major work to be exhibited in very subordinate and unhappily competing situations cramped in with garish trivia. The subtlety of the antique furniture, however, served to act as a quiet foil for the varied range of pots, and quality was allowed to act as a subtle reinforcement of quality.

The pots themselves served to emphasise our existing knowledge of the potter's abilities and background and very usefully pointed to an exciting new development in his work. The technical competence in the work is always evident and this coupled with the true craftsman's love of quality, characterise both his work and that of his father, Carl McConnell, whose influence has been both formative and, I suspect, continuing. The fact that McConnell senior has been one of our greatest pottery innovators by introducing such "outlandish" ware as raku and wood fired celadons into Brisbane in the 1940's and 50's must also have played its part in developing a love for ceramic exploration.

Right: Stoneware Teacup. Neriage technique with iron brush and Shino glaze, 8 x 8 cm

Below: Phillip McConnell's recent exhibition at David Jones' Art Gallery, Sydney

To mention the parent potter does not, however, detract from the exciting and original contribution so far evident in Phillip McConnell's work. The most exciting of these qualities is the strong sense of robust design which exhibits itself, particularly in some of the simpler forms which rely heavily on a sculptural presence, and this refers particularly to such pieces as the catalogue items 1 and 21. Both of these were produced in the Higawari technique with stone explosions and natural ash glaze, as well as Hidasuke markings on the base. The pot, number 21, is a lugged stoneware jar 27.5 cm

in height, while number 1 which was one of the first items sold at the Opening is a stoneware blossom jar 36.5 cm high.

These pots, devoid of any ornamentation but enriched by effects of firing, serve to reinforce what is meant by the potter's strong sense of robust design. The potter has the sense to understand the abilities of the form and the fire to speak for themselves and has wisely acted with restraint. It is of interest that this range of pots, drawing so heavily on the potter's individual ability and on the impact of his stay in Mashiko and Bizen, also appeared to be the most popular with collectors at the Opening. The range of prices, with the blossom jar priced at $2000, is also clearly indicative that the potter's high regard for his work meets healthy agreement among collectors.

The range of work evident in the exhibition is also characteristic of Phillip McConnell's production and one of the other immediately popular groups of pots was the celadon glazed porcelain which always has an elegant and enduring appeal when well made, as in this case. Of great interest was the authentically styled Shino range with a deceptively primitive vitality far removed from so much of the ersatz Shino presently glutting the suburban stalls.

Of perhaps greater interest in the exhibition was a comparatively new range of work providing a lively contrast with the more readily appreciated and already accepted Eastern influenced techniques. The new range was a series of pots in blue and white ware obviously owing their inspiration to traditional Ming ware. The detailed cobalt brushwork on the white gave a strong and rich contrast with the reds of the display furniture and this range promises to provide a fascinating new dimension to the existing repertoire of the potter. To me, the atmosphere of these pots in that setting was evocative of kitchen ware displayed in old farmhouses, and this very naturalness may have accentuated its appeal to others too. Whatever the reason for its appeal however, the direction of this work is valid, and interestingly, it seems to owe little to the major influences which have informed the body of work to date.

Phillip McConnell's pots seemed remarkably at home and looking their best on antique Spanish furniture in David Jones' Art Gallery

Opposite: Phillip McConnell in his studio. Photograph by Dr Stuart Collins

Porcelain bowl, 1983. Blue and white ware, flower scrolls, 16 x 8.5 cm

For anyone wishing to become a potter, the advantages of being born into a potting family are fairly obvious and the McConnells' Pinjarra Pottery could only have provided a sound background of quality production based on admiration for and emulation of Bernard Leach. In the McConnell household *A Potter's Book* was a constant reference and source of inspiration and this, coupled with an experimental and innovative firing program using the "once fire" technique, set standards of production and ideals of working which have influenced potters throughout Australia.

Such an advantageous beginning however, can also present a major handicap to an individual seeking to develop his own style of ceramic ware, with the danger of simply becoming a colourless shadow or technician of a workshop style, but this has not been the case. Phillip

Photography by Stuart Collins

lar, 1983; Stoneware, Higawari technique, 36.5cm

1983; Stoneware, Higawari technique

Fluted Bowl, stoneware, Neriage technique 18.5 x 12cm. Below: Covered Box, stoneware, celadon glaze, 10 x 5 cm

McConnell has nevertheless retained, to his advantage, a number of the characteristics which typify the McConnell tradition. These characteristics are evident in the continuance of the well-developed "once fire" technique, in the advanced throwing technique, and also in fine glaze quality with excellent glaze fit and colour commented on by Michael Cardew when visiting the McConnell's workshop.

The development of a more personalised style was first evident in the Brisbane Reid Gallery exhibition of 1974. This was his second exhibition in that craft-sympathetic gallery which now unfortunately no longer operates. The exhibition was memorable because of the impact of the Japanese experience on Phillip McConnell's pots. Whereas his earlier experiences had benefited him largely in the mastery of technique and control, the Japanese lesson had been in the discovery of the freedom which can only be generated by ability and proficiency. Perhaps the second discovery was the fuller appreciation of the other contributors to the final ceramic product: the qualities of clay and fire were recognised as partners rather than slaves in the process of production.

Stoneware Bottle, 1983; Slip decoration with salt glaze, 27.5 x 14 cm

The Reid Gallery exhibition displayed work which significantly expressed the contribution of kilns and materials. Many of the pots were strongly and unashamedly in the manner of Mashiko and Bizen and provided a continuing theme which still expressed itself in current ware. It will hopefully provide a permanent thread and continuing feature of future work.

The impact of the Japanese kilns and manner of working on the then young McConnell is understandable. Having received an invitation from Tatsuzo Shimaoka to work with him in Mashiko, Phillip McConnell worked there and later with the Fujiwarra family in Bizen, using every opportunity to immerse himself in and absorb the working traditions and outlook of a society attuned to the finest in ceramics. The photographs and expensive catalogues signed to Phillip by the Living Treasures whose workshops and exhibitions he visited are a continuing reminder to the potter of the twelve months he spent in Japan. More significant, however, and coupled with his developed attitudes and working techniques is the range of historic pottery which he now has established in his own gallery. These pots from the great kilns are on view for visitors and also provide a touchstone from a sympathetic but informed tradition and environment. It is as though Phillip McConnell has taken to heart the admonition of Bernard Leach that 'our need of a criterion is apparent ...', but instead of adopting the measures of the T'ang and Sung has aligned more closely with the Japanese idiom.

It is interesting to note that the number of major exhibitions prepared by Phillip McConnell has actually dropped since his return from working in Japan. Prior to that experience the pattern of production seemed to produce at least four one-man shows each year, but possibly the demands of his own gallery and of a workshop trainee may have dictated some limitation in the number of major shows each. While all of these factors are valid it is also apparent from the recent exhibitions that fewer exhibitions are being presented because of the potter's more mature and concerned preparation and selection for them. That is, the more major work being displayed does not admit monthly exhibitions nor does it encourage participation in bazaar-type sales.

At some stage most Australian craftsmen who are not blessed with a private income have to come to grips with the nature of their occupation and it has been a long accepted fact of economic survival in Australian crafts, as indeed it has been historically throughout the world, that the crafts can often be pursued better as an adjunct to another, perhaps seasonal occupation. To many in the western world teaching, rather than crafting, has provided this other necessary prop for the craft. This has in most cases provided an income in turn enabled the production of ceramics often with a high standard of quality, technical experimentation, and philosophical input.

Porcelain Bottle, 1982; Ting glaze with carved floral spray, 27 x 13 cm

Porcelain Bottle, 1982; Carved floral and scroll pattern with overlapping lotus petals on base, celadon glaze, 19.5 x 9 cm

Bottle, 1981; Stoneware, Higawari technique with natural ash glaze and wrapped cord decoration, 23.5 x 12 cm

Wide-necked Bottle, 1982; Stoneware, carved floral decoration with four panels, crackled celadon glaze, 28 x 14 cm

Phillip McConnell in his turn has undertaken a wide range of lectures and demonstrations throughout Australia, working with such institutions as the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and the Brisbane College of Advanced Education. He has also worked with the TAFE systems and organisations such as the Australian Flying Arts School. In these his work is notable and continues on a lesser scale these days, but it should be noted that such work has never provided a prop for his craft. Like his exhibitions these days, lectures and demonstrations are fewer and more carefully selected and the emphasis is increasingly concerned with the quality rather than the alternative marketable quantity.[1]

The emphasis on the aspect of quality is not simply an isolated phenomenon concerned only with the end product of the pot in the exhibition. Having returned to Queensland from Japan, Phillip McConnell consciously decided to work in the pottery ethic he admired, as closely as was possible in this somewhat unsympathetic environment. To many, the 'as closely as possible' would have provided an easy escape hatch and early despair over prevailing conditions, but this has certainly not been the case. Moving from Brisbane to Toowoomba in Queensland presented the potter with a challenging working situation, having some access to a major tourist centre, a conservative but sophisticated Darling Downs population, and a major college in the Darling Down Institute of Advanced Education well known for its summer schools in the Arts.

All of these may have been significant in the

Right: Porcelain Bowl with cedar box, 1983; Stoneware, wood ash glaze, 16 x 8.5 cm

Stoneware Teabowl with cedar box

Porcelain Jar, 1983; Repeated encircled floral pattern, 21 x 18 cm

Porcelain Jar, 1982; Ting glaze, 12 x 11.5 cm

selection of the pottery site and all have certainly had a part in its development and its success but of far more significance to the potter has been the sheer dramatic beauty of the site which provides a sympathetic and even inspiring working environment. The pottery site is on the edge of a high plateau a few miles south of Toowoomba and accessible in dry weather by a winding road just off the Warwick Highway. The detour is well worthwhile as the pottery workshop and gallery again epitomise the aspect which was discussed in relation to the exhibition and which has become part of the philosophical mainspring of the potter's work; the ambience is of importance to the product.

Exhibiting a great deal of imagination, tenacity and sheer hard work, Phillip McConnell has, in the development of his pottery complex, achieved a great deal in providing an appropriate atmosphere for pottery to grow and be considered. As with his father's Pinjarra Pottery, the kiln shed and workshop areas were completed first and a high standard was already established for effective, functional and yet aesthetically pleasing work spaces with a strong emphasis on natural materials and good light. The carpeted gallery followed and work from the pottery was then able to be viewed in adequate space and with sympathetic light and support. Within, the gallery is the developing collection of a small art museum with the ceramic pieces from Japan and selected items from the potter's own kiln providing the basis of the display. The carpeting of the gallery again gives emphasis to priorities within the pottery complex because the family quarters are certainly not complete or carpeted and in a cold Toowoomba winter it is a very significant emphasis which everyone can feel.

To achieve what he has, Phillip McConnell has had some support from the Crafts Board of the Australia Council by the way of a workshop establishment grant in 1975, and he has also had support for two trainees to work with him. The grants have been well applied, and the workshops, the continuing production and exhibitions provide ample supportive evidence.

The list of collections in which the potter's work is represented is already lengthy and impressive as is the list of exhibitions, awards, and growing bibliography, but it is refreshing to note that he is not content to rest on his laurels or the McConnell reputation but is actively pursuing new forms and increasingly higher standards as evidenced by his most recent Ming developments, and perhaps on this topic it would be appropriate to look at the comments of Bernard Leach from his chapter 'Towards a Standard' where he notes that there is no virtue in 'a superficial imitation of early Chinese shapes, patterns and colours unless new life emerges.' But ... 'influences from alien cultures ... pass through an organic assimilation before they become part and parcel of our growth ... by the enthusiasm and profound conviction of men who have themselves succeeded in making the synthesis.'

What we are witnessing in this young potter's work is the development of such a synthesis into a contemporary idiom.

Jeff Shaw

Notes

Jeff Shaw is Head, Division of Creative and Performing Arts, for the campuses of Carseldine, Kedron Park, Kelvin Grove and Mount Gravatt, C. A. E. Brisbane.

1. Readers who are not familiar with David Williams' analysis of this area are commended to read *Craft Education and Training in Australia,* Australia Council 1978.

Fluted Stoneware Jar, slip decoration with salt glaze, 28.5 x 15 cm. Below: Teabowl, 1981; Stoneware, reed and vine pattern, 14 x 8.5 cm

This supplement was generously sponsored by Proton Industries Pty. Ltd., manufacturers of Cox's China Clay, Felspars and Industrial Minerals.

THE CRAFTSMAN AS BOAT BUILDER

LONG Nose Point is a Sydney peninsular striving hard to retain its seafaring identity against a tidal wave of suburbanites. The remnant ship-chandlers and boatbuilders continue their centuries' old crafts in a small series of tumbledown workshops. Their rusty corrugated tin walls once echoed down the length of Louisa Road; now they are merely caulking in a street of chintzy, architecturally-renovated workshops, warehouses and factories.

Fortunately, a new generation of craftsman has emerged to retain and revitalise the rapidly-disappearing skills of the wooden boatbuilder. Foremost is Nick Masterman, a passionate and talented craftsman who combines the skills of modern training in

Photography by Allan Moult

Craftsman/boatbuilder Nick Masterman (right) at work in his Louisa Road workshop, Sydney. Below: Interior aft section of a handbuilt wooden clinker boat by Nick Masterman

Conducting a rowing lesson

naval architecture with the nostalgic obsession of the golden days of sail.

Nick is a world champion class skiff sailor well-known for his work in designing, construction and racing the famed 18-footers that fly around the buoys on Sydney Harbour each weekend. But, his interest in building increasingly stream-lined and faster boats declined, as his passion for clinkerboats gradually evolved. 'I'd always had a soft spot for them,' he says wistfully, tugging at a straggly beard. 'Many childhood holidays were spent at a house on the beach amid clinker-built boats. I vividly remember the smooth bronze fittings, and the copper nails with their patina of dusty green ... the varnished spars, the sail lashed to the mast ... and their seaworthiness, even with the whole family on board.'

Nick's skills as a master boatbuilder are amply demonstrated in each new craft that he and his apprentice, David Copley, produce in their cluttered Louisa Road Workshop. It's the delightful clutter of the craftsman working in natural materials. Aromatic odours fill the air from the layer of woodshavings carpeting the floor — a rare blend of time-honoured ships' timbers: there's silver ash, spotted gum, huon pine, brushbox, tea tree and cedar. Each timber with an unique quality respected by boatbuilders for centuries. There's no slavish devotion to the past in Nick's use of them either; for him they are the best for the job, each with a pure characteristic, albeit strength, flexibility, durability, colour ...

Nick might be a romantic when it comes to visualising a future Sydney Harbour freckled with homebuilt clinker craft, but when it comes to building them, he can be downright pragmatic. He uses hand tools and jigs he bought from a retired Birchgrove

Two wooden clinker boats rest on the sand at Long Nose Point; a permanent reminder of traditional craftsmanship of a bygone age. Right: An upturned boat reveals the smooth, unbroken curves of the hand-planed planks which form the bottom and sides. Opposite: The interior of Nick's workshop and (below) the inside of a skiff showing the steam-bent ribs and sliding seat

boatbuilder, Bert Hancock, and he uses them with efficient dexterity. But, if there's a modern power tool that does the job more efficiently he uses it.

'That's especially true when it comes to sanding,' Nick insists. 'However, no modern tool has the feel of a draw knife, for example, when it comes to cutting excess timber off a transom. With the old tools I can shave it to within millimetres of the final curve and then finish it off beautifully with a hand plane. Probably the best modern tool for the job is a jigsaw, but then it would take half an hour to saw along the grain.'

He is also a firm believer in preventive medicine. 'Many wooden boats, when neglected — for whatever reason — simply rot away. Rain, wind, sun, all take their toll. It's partly the reason wooden boats have such a reputation for needing excessive maintenance compared to the plastic tubs waddling around.

'We accept that wood needs care, but we're also aware of human nature. That's why we try and pre-fabricate each wooden piece, in the sense of getting it to its final shape, and then saturate it in epoxy sealant before it goes into the boat. That way,' Nick stresses, 'each part of the boat is an intricate, epoxy-coated piece, carefully put in and fitted.

'It's the ultimate way to custom build. The boat does not need final finishing, the joins are sealed, and there's protective coating in the hidden places where rot normally can — and will — set in.'

Nick has incorporated another concession to modern times; his clinker hulls have a higher bow to cope with the steeper wash left by modern v-hulled speedboats. 'I don't feel it's a compromise. Every wooden boat ever made has always reflected subtle design changes for reasons as inconsequential as the builder's personal whim, or as dramatic as a change from oar to sail,' he says.

He dismisses outright the argument that his boats are dinosaurs in today's hectic society. 'If anything,' he argues, 'they're a permanent reminder of a past of quality, of products built to last a lifetime — or two. They give you craftsmanship beyond price — steam-bent ribs, hand-planed planks, the sweetest, finest lines that only traditional skills can produce.'

Nick's clinker hulls have a higher bow to cope with the steeper wash left by modern V-hulled speedboats

Detail of foot supports

Detail of oar locks

He feels the younger generation appreciates this more. He says he finds this with the boys and girls who attend his sailing classes. 'They love the look, the feel and natural "smell" of the craft.' Nick first teaches his students to row. 'It can be a lifesaver,' he says. They then learn the intricacies of dinghy sailing.

'They learn quicker on the clinker boats: they understand the simple rigging, the reason for everything. Nothing is hidden by slick plastic decks; the fittings are straightforward and work — they are not over-designed, fiddly or fickle. It's hands-on teaching at the basic level ...'

I watched Nick take a class on a grassy bank overlooking Sydney Harbour. The day's lesson was on reading the wind and tides. The blackboard was rarely used as Nick taught them to use their eyes to interpret the patterns on the water; to understand the manoeuvres of the ferries as they struggled to dock in the tidal surge at Long Nose Point; to sense what would happen to the foresail of a large yacht heading into the lee of Balls Head ... the passing parade became the teacher. The practical lessons on the water were the same. The textbook approach took second place to the basic joy of anticipating the wind and tide, and sailing by feel, not calculation. In the midst of five or six young tousle-headed, fledgling sailors nesting in the wooden hull, sat Nick, windswept bushy hair and beard framing a pair of eyes sparkling with the sheer joy of being under sail.

I'd seen those eyes sparkle before when Nick described how he had become a wooden boat builder.

'You can't grow up in Balmain and not be involved in boat building or boat activities, and I still remember the oldtimers always saying: 'You're not a boatbuilder until you can build a clinker.

'Unfortunately, when I left school there was nowhere to go to learn, no apprenticeships available. So, I ended up doing naval architecture and building steel ships. It had its own rewards, but the breakthrough came when I saw Bert Hancock at his Birchgrove workshop one day about seven years ago.

'He used to have jigs that his father had used before him. This day I discovered to my horror that he had only one left. He'd burned the rest, because "nobody wants wooden boats these days mate. We just can't compete."

'On the spur of the moment I offered to buy the last jig. He threw in the templates and some old hand tools. That's how it all began.'

His first boats were 10-footers skilfully re-created from Bert's jib and templates. They soon established a market, and eventually Nick was asked to re-create a traditional "butcher" boat — the original Sydney Harbour runabout.

Nick explains: 'They were based at the Man-of-War steps where the Opera house is now, and were used to service the sailing ships at anchor with crews and provisions. The story goes that the local butchers and grocers would race each other to the ship coming up the harbour to secure the order for re-provisioning for the return voyage back to England.

Hand-planed planks are pre-fabricated to their correct shape and saturated in epoxy sealant before being fitted into position

'The races gave the craft their name, and also produced a long, slender and very fast running boat. They also developed the sliding seat in the 1860s, so creating the predecessors of the racing sculls. In fact, they still use clinker-built running skiffs as training "tubs" at Oxford and Cambridge.'

We had a demonstration of the butcher boat's speed as Nick rowed along for a photographic session on the harbour. With little effort he kept pace with our runabout and easily won the race back to base. He then caught up with a sluggish tug and surfed effortlessly in its wake.

Back ashore he enthused about the gradual international evolvement of the butcher boat. 'The design is similar to the fossilised remains of Viking boats on display in Oslo's Maritime Museum. Likewise the boats used in England's Lake District and the longboats found on the eastern seaboard of the United States have similar lines.

'It seems,' Nick explains, 'that as the people building them would have been ship's carpenters, they would have known no international boundaries. Wherever they lobbed off a ship they built a boat like the butcher boat. It was fast and did the job. Naturally they would have incorporated the best features they'd come across in their travels and so a world boat evolved.'

As Nick takes pains to stress, Australia has a rich maritime history. 'It's been neglected but remember that up to 20 years ago, everybody who migrated here came by ship. We were totally dependent on sea trade, and today we're still a seaboard nation with an underdeveloped interior.

'Australians have their roots in the sea.'

And if Nick has his way, every Australian will return to his roots in a wooden clinker-hulled boat, preferably one of his.

Unfortunately, it could be a long wait. It takes time to build a Masterman clinker-hulled sailing dinghy. It takes time to cast fittings in bronze from original moulds, to lash manila sheets and lines with leather, to handsplice hemp rigging, to clench 500-odd nails in each hull, and to plane, saw, carve and sand each wooden surface. But in time, these craft too will inspire future generations with their 'smooth bronze fittings and copper nails with a patina of dusty green ... varnished spars, and sail lashed to the mast ...'

Nick Masterman hopes that his apprentices will keep the tradition alive, and in turn train and teach others. Meanwhile, a little tin boatshed on Long Nose Point shuns the assembly line and squeezes out two handbuilt masterpieces a month ... well, nearly every month.

Allan Moult

Detail of bow

Nick Masterman's wooden clinker-hulled skiffs have a similar line to the ancient longboats used by the Vikings. Their traditional design is regarded as extremely seaworthy

JOHN FERWERDA

MASTER VIOLIN MAKER

ON November, 1982, Melbourne master violin maker, John Ferwerda, and his assistant, Geoff Hannon, achieved remarkable success in the Fifth International Competition for instruments of the string family of the prestigious Violin Society of America.

Each was awarded a Cerfiticate of Merit for workmanship for a violin of his own making. In Geoff Hannon's case, the instrument was the first he had completed as apprentice to Ferwerda and it cost him over 1000 hours of dedicated effort.

Ferwerda's award in the same competition, held in Salt Lake City, Utah, was his second and followed an award for workmanship in cello-making in 1978.

Instruments entered in these competitions are judged for tone and also for workmanship by a distinguished panel of experts. The two categories make it possible for any instrument to receive an award for workmanship and not for tone, or vice versa. A majority vote by the judges determines the awarding a Certificate of Merit. Three judges assess the tone and three the workmanship merits of each instrument.

Onus for the delivery of instruments to the adjudication site for each competition is placed squarely on the maker according to the rules laid down by the Society. Instruments entered for the competition must have been completed during the preceding 18 months.

John Ferwerda takes immense pride in his assistant's achievement which was, he maintains, a result of

Front and back view of a cello scroll made for Phillip Green, principal cellist in the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Right: Front view of Geoff Hannon's violin which won a workmanship award in Salt Lake City, November 1982

Detail of a cello made in 1978 which won a workmanship award in San Diego, USA

dedication and devotion to this ancient craft. It is not, he adds, very often that anyone in the competitive craft of violinmaking can win an honour of this type for a first effort.

Geoff Hannon is a BA from Melbourne University, a former English teacher and public servant. He began his apprenticeship to John Ferwerda five years ago in the small shop in the inner Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn from which the present violinmaking and restoration business of John Ferwerda is run today.

Ferwerda has now taken on a second apprentice, 18 year old Rainer Beilharz, who will also be trained in the traditions of stringed instrument making which Ferwerda himself learned during his three and a half years' studying course at the famous Mittenwald School of Violinmaking in Germany. He was accepted

Replica of a 1698 Andreas Guarnerius cello

Side view of Guarnerius replica

Detail of award-winning violin by John Ferwerda

Arpeggione — mould and preparation for making the instrument. This Arpeggione is a copy of the one made in 1923 by Johann Georg Stauffer

Right: John Ferwerda (left) and Geoff Hannon in their Melbourne workshop

John Ferwerda using a finger plane to shape the back of a viola. Photograph by courtesy of The News & Sunday Mail

by the school in 1970, along with five other applicants chosen from a list of 185.

Violinmaking, according to John Ferwerda, while comparatively rare in Australia, has been established here for many years. The country has produced about 72 violin makers and even hosted international competitions as far back as 1882-4.

In the training of his apprentices, Ferwerda uses the same teaching methods as those of the Mittenwald School. These, he says, have served the craft for over 100 years and provide a system of training which is very efficient and very workable.

All Mittenwald students can easily get a job, Ferwerda believes, which is a measure of the school's fame in Germany.

'I used the Mittenwald model form in training Geoff. I told him where he could go wrong if he did not watch certain things. I didn't give him any chance to make mistakes, and he made none. That is the key to success in the Mittenwald approach — it eliminates any possible chance of error. That is the Mittenwald mentality,' he said.

The system is slow and very disciplined, but Ferwerda was careful not to put his first apprentice under pressure, simply using his own past experience and his concept of what makes a good-sounding instrument to guide Geoff toward making a first instrument that proved to be world class. Hannon won his workmanship award over 150 instruments entered from 15 countries and many of the entrant makers had formidable reputations.

John Ferwerda's own personal quest for excellence calls for discipline, a logical procedure of work which is incorporated into his training methods.

At Mittenwald, he says, students do not question, never ask why. They work as instructed purely because that is the accepted tradition. Geoff Hannon, he adds, questioned many of the procedures and this kept Ferwerda "on his toes" throughout the course of the construction of his award-winning violin.

Ferwerda contends that few people today have the patience and dedication to make a stringed instrument by hand. It can take up to 160 hours to complete a violin and the craft can be a lonely one.

There are few really good violin makers and repairers in Australia, he adds, and it can take time to convince both players and teachers of the excellence of locally produced instruments. In his own case, proving himself to other professionals has taken 10 years. He has now crafted over 90 instruments, ranging from violins and cellos to double bass gambas and a bowed guitar.

Ferwerda feels that young Australians who want to train as makers of stringed instruments face severe difficulties. There is no course in Australia that they can attend and they must try to find subjects in other disciplines and adapt them to their own needs. They need a sound basis in the theory of music and must understand acoustics and learn drafting. Not all of what they must learn can be taught in a workshop, Ferwerda maintains.

In addition, his apprentices cannot participate in any Government subsidised schemes as violinmaking is not a "proclaimed" trade and does not come under any State or Federal Government schemes.

He would like to see more communication between all instrument makers. This, he feels, would help raise the general standard and provide competition that would in itself help keep alive what is in danger of becoming a dying art.

John Ferwerda says that no changes have occurred in violinmaking over the past 300 years. There are still 72 basic parts that go into producing an instrument and they are still almost entirely handcrafted. The carving of the scroll, for example, is a meticulous and painstaking affair, and choice of materials and tools is of paramount concern to the craftsman.

The finest violins have a spruce belly, maple back, ribs and scroll. The fingerboard on the neck is of ebony. Timbers are imported from Europe, from Alpine regions over 5000 feet. Once cut, woods are stored for at least 30 years at constant humidity. Australian timbers are unsuitable because of high sap content.

Workmanship is a matter of line and style, according to Geoff Hannon, plus technique. Everything must fit perfectly; it has to be perfect or the instrument may fall apart under very dry conditions, he adds.

John Ferwerda is one of a handful of expert violinmakers in Australia, and he has operated his Hawthorn business since 1978. Handcrafted Ferwerda instruments have been made for professional musicians and gifted amateurs in Germany, England, Austria, Holland, Israel, New Zealand as well as from this country. Professional players using his instruments adorn such groups as the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Elizabethan Trust Orchestra and the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, among others. Musician customers are encouraged to follow the making of their instrument from start to finish by visiting the workshop during construction.

Ferwerda's approach to violinmaking craftsmanship combines expertise, dedication and the experience of having seen many good old instruments. He has been a professional musican himself, so fully understands the reasons why such instruments sound as good as they do.

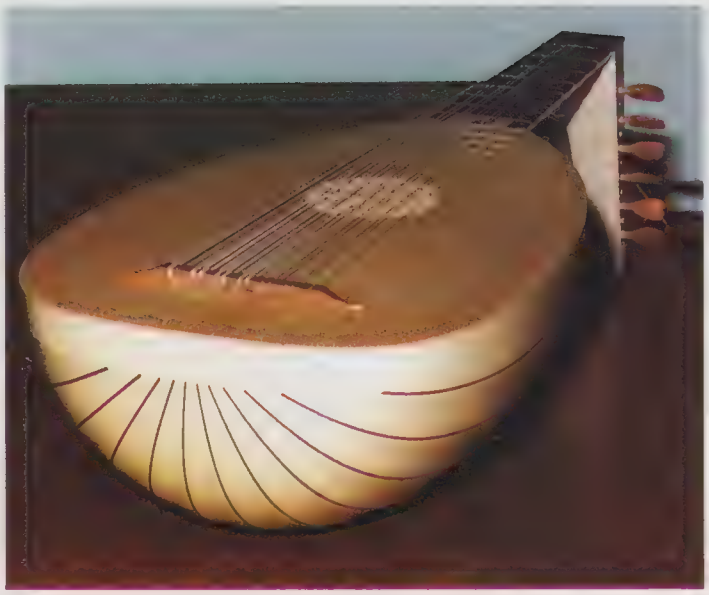
As well as really knowing what makes an instrument tick, Ferwerda maintains that a good craftsman must also put together his own concept of what a good sound should be, by building on the past experience of different makers.

It is all, he says, a matter of patience, experience and time.

K. L.

To help develop public awareness of the variety and quality of handcrafted Australian instruments, the Australia Music Centre together with the Australian Association of Musical Instrument Makers and the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences is presenting a series of exhibitions of Australian made musical instruments.

The exhibition has been running since October 1983, and will continue until mid-1984. Located at the Australia Music Centre, George Street, the Rocks, it consists of six different displays each of which stands for approximately six weeks. Each display focuses on a specific instrumental grouping — guitars, early instruments, brass, woodwinds, strings and percussion — and includes instruments made by several different craftsmen. Six concerts featuring the instruments on show for each of the display series are an integral part of the exhibition, giving the makers a chance to discuss their instrument's features and performance characteristics.



Arnold Black, Lute of flamed maple with ebony rib spacings, 1983

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT MAKING IN AUSTRALIA

MUSICAL instrument making in Australia is flourishing. Several Australian makers are now internationally recognised for the outstanding quality of the instruments they produce, and many compare equally with the best in the world. At a time when many commercial manufacturers are finding it hard to survive, the smaller independent craftsman is thriving, and the past few years have seen a steady increase in the numbers of such craftsmen. The Australian Association of Musical Instrument Makers (AAMIM) lists 260 makers, about half of whom are members of the Association.

But Australians still suffer something of the cultural cringe when it comes to acknowledging the Australian product. Despite the example set by makers such as Greg Smallman, whose guitars are played by John Williams, Fred Morgan, whose recorders are played by Franz Brueggen, and Peter Biffen, John Hall and John Ferwerda all of

Arnold Black, detail of lute above

Frank O'Gallagher, Celtic harp

BOB BOLTON

whom receive regular commissions from overseas for their early and modern stringed instruments, there remains an assumption that Australian-made instruments are inherently inferior to imported ones.

Curator of Musical Instruments at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Frances Davis, believes that resistance to Australian-made instruments stems from a lack of knowledge about the quality of the products as well as from a general lack of interest in the history of object manufacturing in this country. She points out that little has been written on the history of instrument making in Australia, although its roots stretch back to early colonial days. Many people still look to England and Europe for musical instruments with Australian-made handcrafted instruments accounting for less than five percent of the local market. Frances Davis believes that 'People are probably paying more for inferior imported instruments. If they bought an Australian one, they'd be very likely to get a better instrument.'

We also still look to success in Europe for validation of our own makers' worth; if they're selling there they must be good. Given the tradition of excellence that some European centres have set, such an attitude is understandable, but it must also be remembered that access to the overseas market is a problem for Australian makers so that it is a somewhat spurious yardstick.

John Hall is nationally and internationally recognised as one of the best makers of early

Above: Rosette of guitar designed and made by Arnold Black

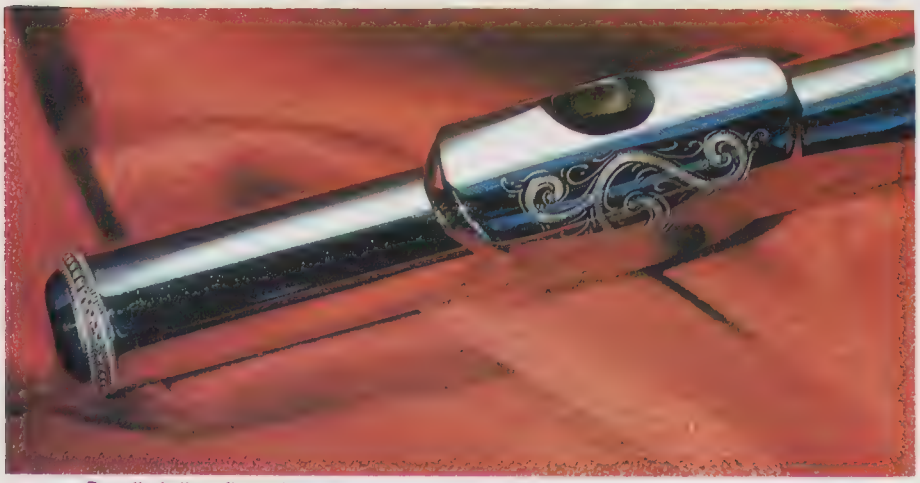
Right: Guitar by Arnold Black made from Australian timbers

John Hall, Bass viol (viola da gamba) from Brazilian rosewood and maple (back and sides) and spruce (top), with rosewood pegs and maple fingerboard

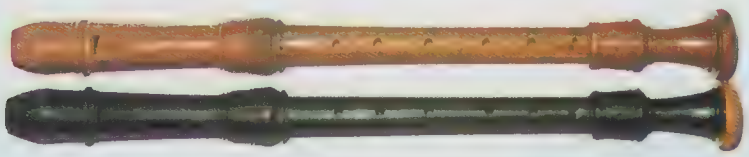
Lute-backed hurdy-gurdy by Robert Meadows from figured spruce, mahogany

Front view of bass viol by John Hall

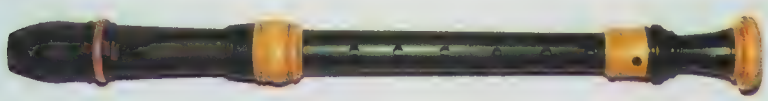
Hand-crafted silver flute by Flutemakers of Australia (John Lehner and Ray Holliday)



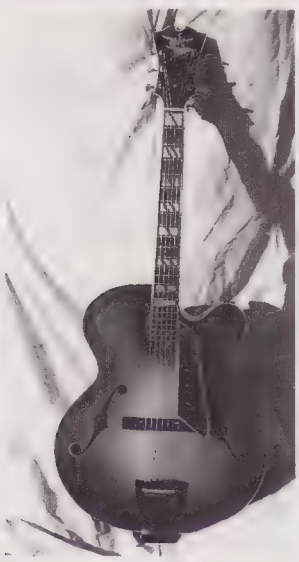
Detail of silver flute showing engraved lip plate



Treble recorders by Howard Oberg from balah (top) and ebony (bottom)



Descant recorder by Howard Oberg from ebony and boxwood



Fully acoustic jazz guitar by Robert Meadows. Right: Detail of mother-of-pearl and abalone inlay

stringed instruments. His experience is that most players like to have personal contact with the person who makes their instrument. 'You could be a maker in Australia who is equally as good as someone in Europe, but most players there would rather go to a maker in the next town rather than conduct a laborious 12,000 mile correspondence with someone here. Even after the instrument is made, there are still difficulties. A large, fragile instrument like a bass viola is difficult and expensive to transport,' he says.

Australia's geographical isolation means that makers here may also face difficulties in keeping abreast of overseas trends. 'It's much more of an effort to be aware of what's happening in techniques and standards, whereas a maker in England can, with very little expense, travel across to Europe once a year or so to have a look around.'

Over the past ten years, the Crafts and the Music Boards of the Australia Council have provided financial assistance to the tune of $236,592 for a variety of projects related to instrument making. John Hall received a grant to research stringed instrument making in Europe in 1974, and two recent grants have gone to Robert Meadows and Arnold Black.

Robert Meadows' workshop in the inner-Sydney suburb of Erskineville was established this year with the help of a Crafts Board development grant. Entering the workshop is like taking several steps back in time from the noisy street outside. Stocks of uncut wood, a half-made lute, medieval pictures and woodshaving fill the room. Robert has returned recently from England where he completed the three-year course on early fretted instrument making at the London College of Furniture.

He makes both modern and early instruments, and while in England won the English Open Woodwork Prize for two consecutive years. The first year was won with a fully acoustic jazz guitar, and the second with a traditional lute-backed hurdy-gurdy made from figured spruce and mahogany with ivory keys and insets.

He describes his approach to instrument making as 'more traditional than some', although he is also a realist about some of the construction controversies which often cause bitter splits within the instrument making world. He uses his own designs for modern instruments such as his

Continued on page 109

Lutenist Max Hynam playing a 14 coure theorbo made by Peter Biffen

JENNY ORCHARD

Photography by Geoff Hoey

Cactus Planter, 1980, height 17 cm

Whimsical interpretations in colour and form

THERE is a real delight in Jenny Orchard's pottery. The bright colours are splattered with spots, daubs, and brushstrokes; angular or geometric shapes — spikes, cones, cylinders, spheres — join in playful, unexpected ways. Coffee cups lean like the Tower of Pisa. Teapots perch on three conical legs, daring you to believe they wobble. (They don't.) Vases angle through geometric planes, defying you to imagine flowers with zigzag stems. Spikes sprout in rings around the neck of a pot. The effect is zany and extremely stylish.

The work seems almost graphically designed, following the dictum that regularity may bore the eye. All the work is slip-cast and the resultant shapes joined together like jigsaw puzzles. Slip-casting is done with moulds, rather than by handthrowing on a wheel. First a "negative" mould is made by coating an object with plaster of paris. Wet, runny clay, with the consistency of cream, is poured into this mould. When the clay begins to harden, the inner clay, still milky, is poured out, leaving the inner shape for later assemblage and firing. Each assembled piece is therefore slightly different from its predecessor as the potter builds the form each time.

Jenny Orchard began slip-casting when a student at Alexander Mackie CAE before that college entered its present phase as part of Sydney's City Art Institute. 'Slip-casting was not appreciated by the teachers,' she says with a smile. 'They thought that wasn't pottery. You had to use a wheel. You

Coffee Pot, 1983, ht 24 cm

Opposite: Teapot and Vase (ht 23 cm), 1983. Purchased by the Australian National Gallery

had to follow a certain pattern of craftsmanship. It was the era of the round brown coffee mug. That's all finished now but in 1977-79 when I was a student, everyone thought that the object had to be handthrown, that pottery made this way was honest and pure.

'The things that I like best are objects which are really simple and yet childlike. Simple, yet complex — a contradiction. And childlike — which is why I like the bright colours. I like things that defy the normal bounds of "good taste". I hate that really safe "good taste". I wanted to do something that was good to look at, beautiful to look at, but that broke all the rules.'

Through the individuality of the pottery, several influences can be discerned. In Sydney's antique dealers' row, Queen Street, Woollahra, is Copeland and de Soos, specialising in 20th century decorative arts. Typical stock might include the art nouveau cameo glass of Emile Galle, English art deco of Clarice Cliff and the work of modernist Finnish furniture designer Alvaraalto. Jenny Orchard had a workshop for a year at Copeland and de Soos premises and was much encouraged by the proprietors. Another influence is the work of Martin Sharp, whose illustrations in Oz magazine and posters for rock concerts were a familiar sight when Jenny Orchard lived in London in the late 1960s. Perhaps this shows in the circus-like feel in some of her work.

Influences can come from odd places. Anthea Leonard, who runs Sweetart for crazy cakes

Vase, 1983, ht 21 cm

Necklaces, 1983

'Neo-Deo-Urn No. 2', vase, ht 35 cm, 1983. Purchased by Bathurst Regional Gallery. Left: Teapot, ht 22 cm, 1983. Purchased by Bathurst Regional Gallery. Below: Part of Coffee Set, 1979; Pot ht 20 cm, Mug ht 9 cm

made to order, worked next door to Jenny's workshop. It was a diversion to visit and she became fascinated with the metallic point that forms the spike on an icing bag. First she tried to extrude clay through an icing bag. Impossible. So then she cast the spikes, using them as macho hedges which look rather ferocious.

The form and function argument acquires a certain irrelevance when Orchard ceramics are discussed. The round brown coffee mug is reassuring but Jenny Orchard pottery can be a little perplexing as you wonder just where the flow from your determinedly leaning coffee cup will run. In fact, nearly all the ware is functional but there is some rule-bending with its visual impact.

'Utility', explains Jenny Orchard, 'is not my primary consideration. Aesthetics is. I make my pieces for fun, for people who like to play, who want to drink tea from an exotic pot. I like to think that people will use my work for different or special occasions, like a dinner party with friends. Perhaps I am much influenced by the English tea rituals of my childhood, which was spent in Rhodesia. When my family returned home in the evening, tea was served on a tray by a house boy. We sat and talked about our day, what we had done. It was a ritual.'

Vase, ht 28 cm, 1981

Orchard ceramics are held by the Victoria and Albert Museum in Hobart, the Shepparton Collection, the Australian National Gallery and the Victorian State Craft Collection. She has exhibited with Distelfink in Melbourne, at Crafts 81 at the Meat Market Centre, also in Melbourne, at Sydney's Blackfriars where she held a one-person show in 1981, at the Mayfair Ceramic Show in 1981 and 1983 and in the Elements of Change exhibition at the Crafts Council of NSW in 1983. A realist, she believes that it is important for potters to exhibit. The reason? 'You must have your work in collections so people think it's real.'

The workshop is situated in the large front room upstairs in the terrace house where Jenny Orchard lives with her husband and two small children. Shelving lining the workshop walls is cluttered with ceramics in varying stages of completion. There are tall vases with pinched waists joining truncated cones, cups with flat triangles for handles, elegant, jaunty jugs, koala bears, kookaburras and mounds of jewellery beads. The fireplace is covered with plastic glaze containers and the verandah is packed with moulds. There are three Ward electric kilns, a small one for jewellery, another for larger pieces and a third awaiting repair.

Pottery is bisque fired to around 1000°, while the second firing reaches approximately 1120°. Temperature must be carefully controlled, so that maximum heat is reached in around 12 hours. If the slip has any air bubbles, these will crack the pot unless the firing is very slow, allowing the bubbles to dissipate through the walls of the pot. It might take four or five hours to take the kiln to 200°.

Adding to the riot of colour and objects are a poster of parrots, lorikeets and cockatoos, a pinboard with cuttings from Italian design and ceramic magazines and a freestanding plastic mobile with streamers of pink and yellow flowers, a baby face and odd rattle shapes. You wonder whether this festive froth of kitsch delights mother or children more.

But there is nothing kitsch about the ceramics, though a sense of impish fun peeks through. Ballerina-like, a tiny teapot balances on three elongated speckled legs, creating a tippy-toe effect. A bold, beaked saffron jug splays on three small legs, its pattern of small red splodges daring you to stroke their textures. You find yourself amazed and amused by the audacity of a cup which resembles nothing so much as two jointed pipes, while retaining an airy grace. Another teapot, decorated with a circus of happy squiggles, wears its lid jauntily to one side, its spout pointing cheekily heavenward.

Many of the necklaces look like luscious lollies and lozenges. Strings of domino beads are separated by small cherry beads, toned well enough to eat. There are rock candy necklaces, necklaces composed of vigorous white teeth brushed with black smudges. Most of the rounder beads have fascinating, squashy, irregular shapes, picked out in brightly coloured, contrasting spots. Like many of the pots, these are saucy, confident, stylish works. They would be equally at home at catwalk parades or beachside barbecues.

Such evident individuality is not achieved without struggle. Follow the party line and you may well finish up with the party product, indistinguishable from its neighbours. Jenny Orchard remarks, 'The crafts have long been obsessed with technical perfection. It was only by thinking that I could ignore that at one stage that I felt I could get my ideas across. I work quite hard on technique, on making things as aesthetic as I can. But that's not the end result.'

In the future, this ceramist is looking forward to 'more colourful, more exotic things.' Among these, ceramic bases with fibreglass fabric and paper lampshades are now in the planning stage. She hopes to rely more upon exhibition pieces rather than the daily bread production of planters, coffee mugs and koalas. If the gods smile and the grant comes, she will set up a new workshop outside her home.

Orchard ceramics have the charm of laughter and confident colour, the elegance of strong and vigorous line, and a headstrong sense of individuality. Sometimes the flavours of the luxury movements of art deco or art nouveau are apparent; sometimes there are punning plays on the painters and potters of fame and fortune. But the overwhelming sense is that of the potter herself, of the childlike simplicities that are so complex to achieve.

Jan Mackey

Jenny Orchard

An interview with Douglas Fuchs

MANY readers will be familiar with the name Doug Fuchs from his time in Australia as Craft Fellow in 1981. A New York craftsman, he combines the techniques of weaving and basketry to produce a variety of sculptural forms and installations. Recently Dean Leith spoke to him in New York about his time in Australia and his current work.

Leith: You were born in New York, Doug, and raised in the Bronx. What are the origins of your work in weaving and basketry?

Fuchs: I actually became interested in weaving and basketry when teaching art to emotionally disturbed adolescent boys in a reform school. This was in 1973. I was running an art program and needed things to teach them so I started taking basketry workshops myself. I slowly developed this into my own form of personal expression, I guess, and now I make a living out of it.

Leith: Your work has progressed from using basic weaving and basketry techniques to creating sculptural forms and environments. How has this come about?

Fuchs: This was probably because I couldn't possibly sit and make the same object over and over again, like a functional basket for instance. Production basket-making never interested me and I always had the feeling that what I liked was not that you actually made the object like the basket but rather the actual process of working with the materials and the possibilities for creating other forms. I think I've been somewhat successful in developing different techniques of basketry and using them to create sculptural objects that are considered as sculpture and not so much as a basket. I really do like the feeling of the materials I use too; they have a fragility but a certain strength as well. It's also the association with natural living materials that I enjoy — it's somehow reassuring.

Leith: How long was your stay in Australia?

Fuchs: Originally I was supposed to be in Australia for a year but I ended up staying about 14 months. I saw the Crafts Council's Fellowship advertised in *American Craft* magazine and the second time I applied I was successful, so I went to Australia in May of 1981. At that stage I'd had about three exhibitions in New York and various group shows outside New York.

Leith: Tell me about your stay in Australia. How was your time spent?

Fuchs: I saw a lot. I began by spending three weeks in Arnhem Land and then some time in Darwin. From there out to a small Aboriginal town with Mr Alan Wood, an anthropologist and director of the Aboriginal Arts Board. From here I went to other small towns and then back to Darwin for a workshop. I spent some time in Alice Springs and then out to Yuendumu where the Warlbiri people live. I had become friendly with an Aboriginal woman and she took me out there to meet her people. After this I had five months in Adelaide, two in Melbourne, a week in Tasmania and about four and a half months in Sydney and Brisbane.

Leith: And in each city, how was your work received?

Fuchs: Well my major work, 'Floating Forest', was very well received in every place. I had felt that I had taken a big risk in doing it as I'd never done anything as elaborate before. But people responded in a very heartfelt way to the images and I found it all very encouraging. The piece itself looked very different in each location. In Adelaide, the Festival Centre Gallery is a completely different type of space from the Meat Market in Melbourne and again from the Crafts Council Gallery in Sydney. All places have a completely different feeling.

New York craftsman Doug Fuchs. Left: 'Quiet Cone', flat and round reed seagrass raffia, telephone wire and acrylic paint, ht. 15 x 3 ft. Installed at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York. Photograph by Catherine Sendeker

'Rainbow Forest' by Doug Fuchs, 12 x 8 ft

Leith: Do you think your time in Australia, especially that spent with the Aborigines, has had a significant influence on your work?

Fuchs: It certainly influenced Floating Forest which was the piece that I did there. Very much so. I can't actually articulate this influence but most people who saw the piece said that I must have spent time with Aboriginal people or thought that an Aboriginal had made it. Not that I had copied Aboriginal art or styles, I think it was more a quality of the work or perhaps the materials and forms that seemed in some abstract way to say something about Aboriginal life.

Leith: Did the initial concept for Floating Forest come directly from your time with the Aborigines?

Fuchs: No, I had had an idea of an environment based entirely on a forest for some time before I came to Australia. I had made several totems which I had clustered together and wanted to create an environment that you could go into and wander around in. Also I had been reading for three or four years about forests and the symbolism of forests and I became very interested in trying to convey this in my work. It all seemed to fall together and then somehow being in Australia was the catalyst.

Leith: Competition is obviously much keener in the art/craft scene generally in New York than it is in Australia. Did you find this to be the case in your particular field?

Fuchs: Yes, I agree competition is very keen in New York. I've been quite lucky though. Initially my work was discovered by someone and they wanted to put it in a show. From that one show back in 1979, the others followed and I haven't really had to go out and pound the pavements. I've been lucky in that people have responded to my work and gone after me which is very nice. I have put a lot of money and effort into photography though and always had photos and slides of my work which represent it very well. So when people want to see what I do, they can. As far as competition in Australia is concerned, it is very hard to assess as a visitor. People are usually very nice to you so you can't tell. It would be an interesting exercise to actually be living in Sydney and try and drum up a show. Maybe I'll try that in the future.

Leith: Are there any artists with whom you came into contact in Australia whose work you particularly admire?

Fuchs: Yes, there were quite a number, including two sculptors in Adelaide who were both quite different but whose work I really admired. One was an Iranian artist, Hassan Valamanesh, who used sticks and stones and natural materials, and also Mark Thompson who was working on a piece for the Adelaide Festival when I was there. Both I found very intriguing. Heather Dorrough's work I also found very interesting and I was very taken by Ken Unsworth, who had a piece in the Sydney Biennale. I also admire James Draper's ceramic work.

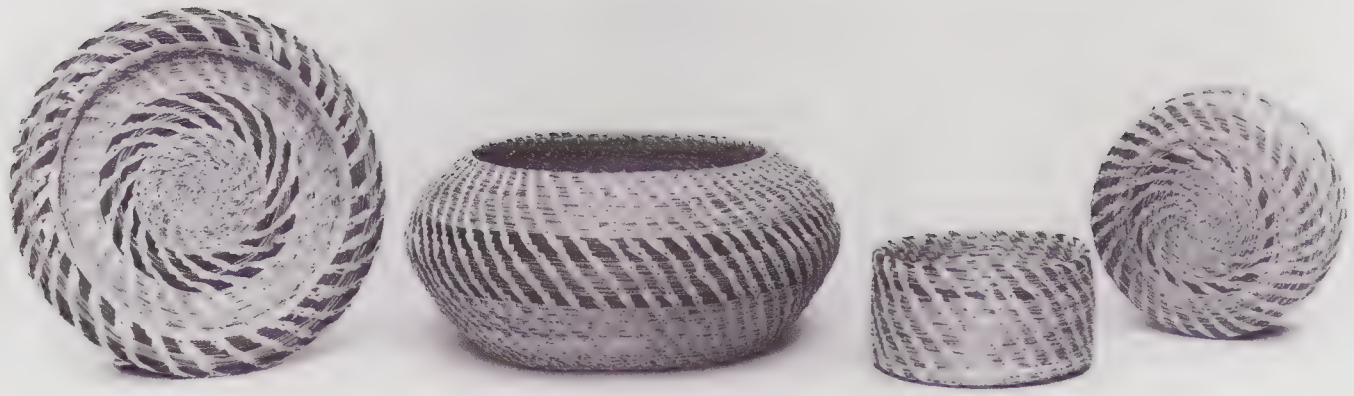
Leith: How do you find teaching? Is it a necessary part of your work?

Fuchs: It certainly isn't a necesary part of my work. I enjoy the contact with people and a certain amount of teaching is very pleasurable. However teaching to make a living and teaching three or four days a week is very draining. I've been teaching art for 12 years now and it takes a lot of energy to deliver the goods emotionally and intellectually. I find I don't have a whole lot left for myself after a week of teaching so I prefer to only do one or two days and live on what I make as an artist. This is actually starting to happen and I think in the future I'll have less time teaching and more time to spend on my work.

Leith: What's been happening with respect to exhibitions and shows since your return from Australia?

Fuchs: My work has changed a lot. I was influenced by a lot of things both in Australia and while travelling back through South East Asia and Thailand. I'm using a lot more colour in my work now and some synthetics. Since I've been back I've been in a number of shows: one at Boston University called 'Woven, Painted and Built' and another in Miami. I've been in a retrospective show called 'The Evolution of Seven Artists' in a gallery in Hastings-on-Hudson showing seven craftspeople who have developed from doing very functional work to making artistic statements with the same materials that they started out using. Someone is interested in bringing the Floating Forest to America so there is a possibility that the piece I made in Australia may be brought to the United States to tour around. Currently, I'm in a show at the Bronx Museum of the Arts.

Dean Leith



Baskets with lids by Trooper W.B. Meo, Repatriation War, Perth Hospital, 1939-45

BASKETRY FROM THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

IF basketry is not the earliest craft form, preceding even pottery and weaving, it would be a major surprise. In the earliest stirrings of human society all energies were put toward survival. Basketry was the ideal craft form to enhance that goal. Try to imagine the functions of hunting, gathering and collecting of food without a basket.

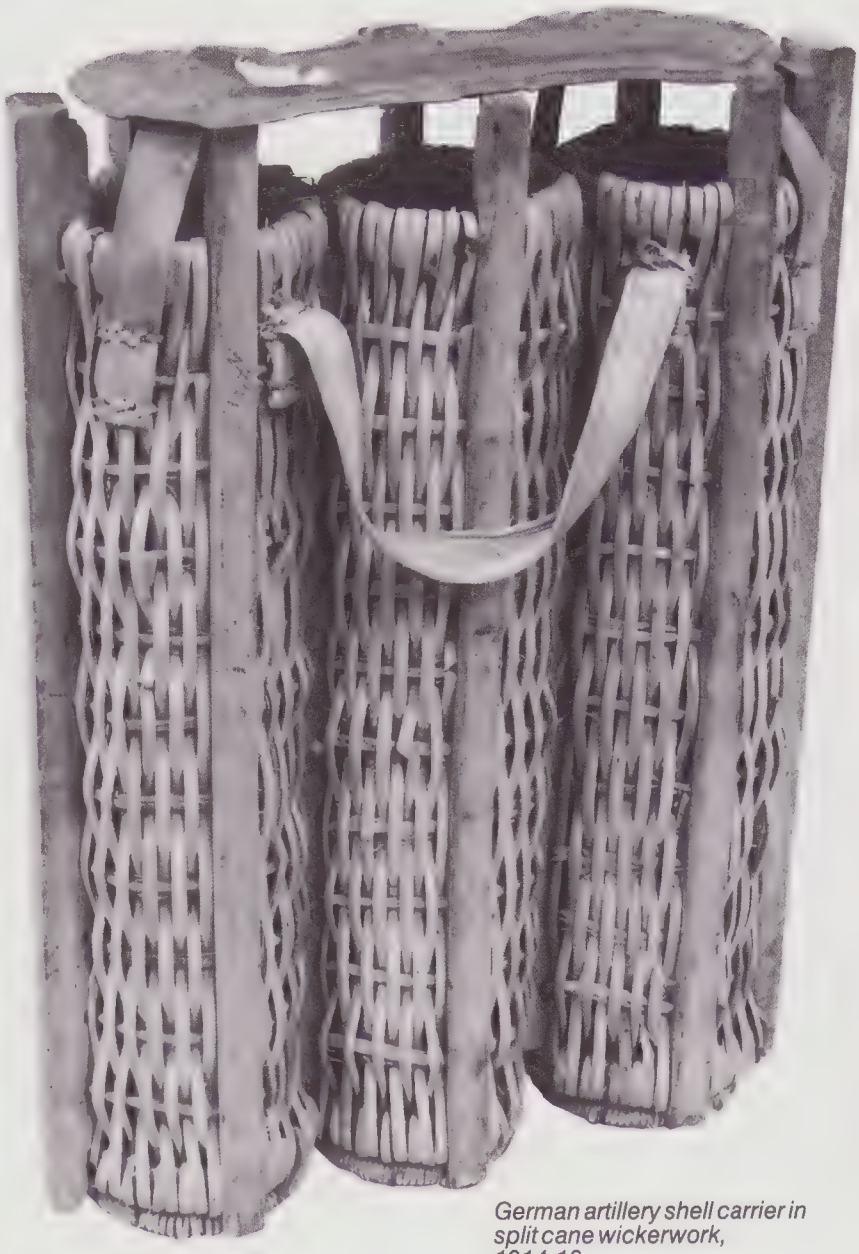
As the fundamentals of basketry have remained unchanged for over 7000 years, it is axiomatic that the nature of basketry is restrictive. The levels of technology required for the craft have remained low, thus ensuring its survival. This also means that the process is labour-intensive.

The Australian War Memorial's basketry comes from a collection spanning two world wars. In spite of the advanced technology of war, the basket has consistently found a place. Typically, the baskets have been made by a rural population familiar with traditional basketry forms and willing to accept the required demands of time.

The functions of the Australian War Memorial basketry differ slightly, however, from the traditional form of containers. The most original group of basketry comes from the need for protection from the elements. Basketry hats, for example, can be stylish, yet utilitarian. A coiled sisal hat in the collection was made by an Askari basket-maker for an Australian serving with the Equatorial Corps in the African Sudan; while the basketry Naval hat, a rare example of an early Australian uniform accessory, would probably have been a commercial product during the colonial period.

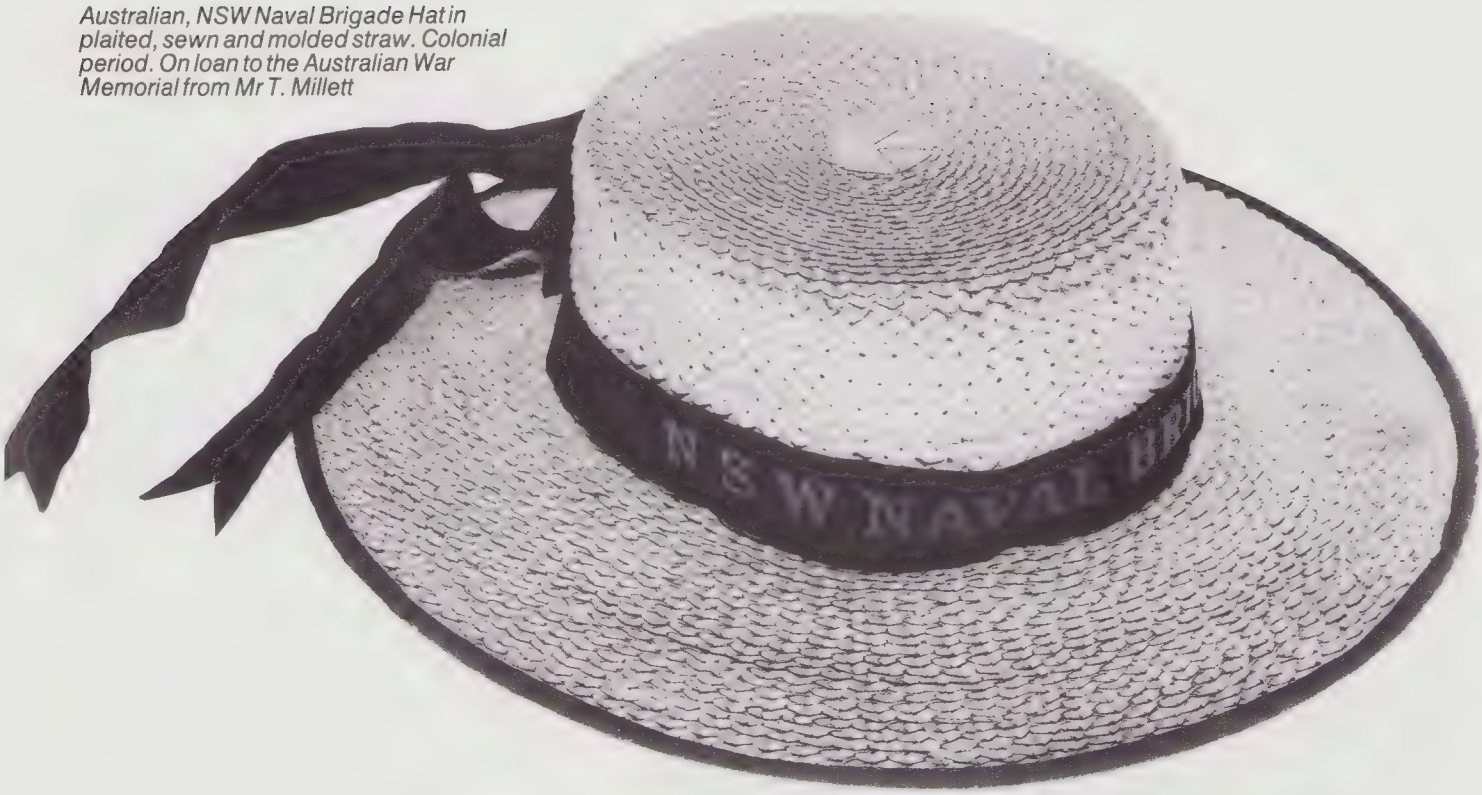
Plaited German overshoes from the 1914-18 war lack style but show remarkable ingenuity in solving the problem of cold feet. These shoes were made by Flemish country folk and are designed to keep the feet warm and dry in the sodden Flemish countryside. The straw shoes would have been worn over boots.

The collection includes containers formed from local materials which were quite durable in use. A German wicker shell-carrier from the 1914-18 war holds three artillery rounds and when filled, three shells would have been all one person would have wished to carry. This carrier is one of the few



German artillery shell carrier in split cane wickerwork, 1914-18

Australian, NSW Naval Brigade Hat in plaited, sewn and molded straw. Colonial period. On loan to the Australian War Memorial from Mr T. Millett



basketry items to offer any concession to modern technology as it uses a pressed steel lid to hold its cargo in place.

The pigeon carrier, designed to hold two birds, is plaited from excellent English willow. It is only one example of the willow work produced in Britain during the 1939-45 war. An example of the contribution of English basket makers during this period is the two million willow hampers made for dropping supplies to Commonwealth troops from aeroplanes.

An especially interesting use for basketry is demonstrated by the coiled baskets produced by the Australian Red Cross rehabilitation program for wounded soldiers. These programs were run in hospitals here and abroad and used in instruction in basketry and other crafts to restore confidence and dexterity to wounded soldiers. As the coiled work of Trooper Meo illustrates, the program had notable aesthetic success. The reserve collection of the Australian War Memorial holds many other examples of the basketry and other craft from this program.

From these examples of basketry, we find confirmation that the intrinsic purpose of basketry is utility. Yet in its most strict utilitarian role, basketry can still offer aesthetic rewards through the skilful use of natural materials. This confirms the definition of the craft as one of the useful arts.

Michael Bogle

Australian Equatorial Corp Hat in coiled sisal, 1939-45

Pigeon basket in plaited willow used by the British Army, 1939-45

German overshoes in plaited straw, 1914-18

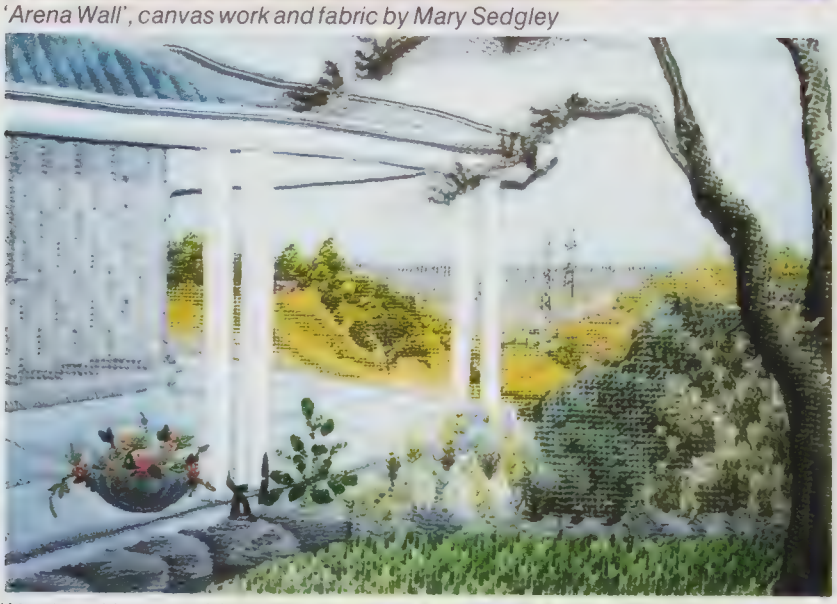
Advanced Embroidery Course

'Arena Wall', canvas work and fabric by Mary Sedgley

IN recent years embroidery has become a major growth area in the contemporary crafts movement throughout the world. What was for many generations a highly disciplined, technique-oriented craft, practised exclusively by women as a means of decorating fabric with traditional floral motifs, is today finding much wider interpretation with the introduction of innovative techniques and experimental design applications.

The diverse and highly original works of contemporary embroiderers such as David Green, Heather Dorrough, Michael Brennan-Wood and Annemieke Mein, to mention a few, have removed the craft from the parlour into the studio and demonstrated the unlimited potential to which creative embroidery can be applied within the context of modern fibre art.

The reasons for the revival of embroidery as a contemporary art form have not been fully



'Northern Verandah' (detail), canvas work and fabric by Mary Sedgley

Soft sculpture (detail) by Maria Gingold

'The Log', machine embroidery by Madge Copland

Wall-piece by Jeanne Fletcher

'Tree Pendant', metalwork and embroidery by Ailsa Hales

Right: 'Cave Entrance', three-dimensional sculpture, fabric applique by Ailsa Hales

'Coup D'oeil', handmade paper patchwork and embroidery by Val Landman

researched, but forms part of the universal trend towards a greater appreciation of the aesthetic. Due to rapid advances in technology, mass production, shorter working hours and labour saving devices, mankind as a whole feels a stronger urge to express himself through the creative arts and crafts.

Embroidery guilds in every state are attracting an increasing number of new members and expanding their courses to embrace advanced and unconventional techniques.

Last year the Embroiderer's Guild of Victoria extended its textile arts program with an advanced embroidery course aimed at stimulating a more critical and evaluative approach to embroidery design among members who had gained a high degree of proficiency in the various techniques. Textile Arts II is a certificate course that places greater emphasis on initiative and experimentation in the development of original design concepts.

The Guild already provides comprehensive instruction in its Textile Arts I course, which covers the following three main areas of embroidery.

Surface Stitchery in the following technical areas: outline stitches, jacobean or crewel work, laid work, gold work, black work, cross stitch, Assisi work, Swedish darning, canvas work, manipulative skills in needlework and joining or applying fabric.

Three Dimensional Embroidery through use of: net darning, drawn fabric, drawn thread, cut work, needleweaving, quilting, smocking, padding and applied found objects.

Embroidery Combined with Other Crafts: dyed or printed fabric, metal, jewellery, macrame, crochet, knitting, knotting or twisting, tatting, lace, spinning, weaving, soft sculpture and hard sculpture.

As an extension of the above, Textile Arts II aims to develop a higher level of understanding and achievement in advanced technique, design and composition. This course will be repeated in 1984.

K.L.

For further information about the Embroiderer's Guild of Victoria, write to the Secretary at 170 Wattletree Road, Malvern, Melbourne 3144.

Garry Greenwood's
LEATHER SCULPTURES

Garry Greenwood

GARRY Greenwood makes things in leather—things which are first visualised in his mind's eye, then realised through his hands' skill. It is the purpose of this article to consider the process of creation of work from Garry's viewpoint, insofar as he has been able to describe it to me and I have been able to observe it over the course of some years.

We must begin with the axiom that some people spend their lives giving physical form to their inner visions. To ask Garry, 'Why do you do it?', is as futile as asking that question of any other creative person. He himself does not know the answer, nor does he spend time grappling with the question. He simply gets on with doing that which he must. The subsequent stages of the creative process from vision and design through technique and execution to a finished object, however, can be more or less described by Garry (and perceived by others), and those of us who stand as observers of his work will be more able to understand and appreciate it if we can see it through his eyes as well as our own.

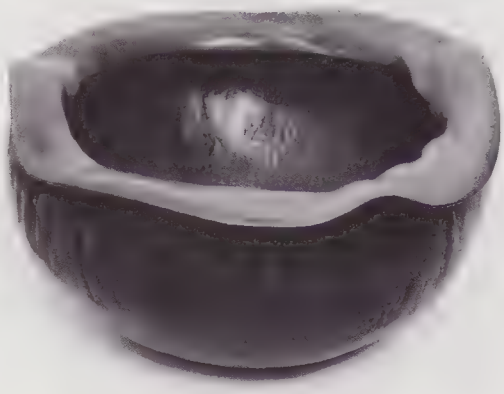
Garry Greenwood did not begin his career using leather even though he was attracted to the unique properties of the material and occasionally experimented with its use. The trouble was that the traditional uses of leather in bags, sandals and belts, and the traditional techniques of making them did not appeal to his personal aesthetic sense. The problem began to resolve itself when he discovered the time-honoured but relatively little-used technique of wet-forming leather into three-dimensional shapes, with its inherent possibilities for allowing the fabrication of freer forms. Here was a way to match the material to the vision, and he was soon extending the old methods of work and developing new ones as he took to working with leather as his vocation.

Among the many facets of his personal aesthetic sense, Garry identifies some which have a greater influence upon his work than others. He considers line to be of the greatest importance and has a strong sense of "rightness" for the flow of the curves defining the form he is creating (as can be seen in photos of his work in the articles by April Hersey and Rex Lingwood in *Craft Australia*, Winter, 1979/2 and Spring 1982/3, respectively). Important, too is the expression of tension, whether made explicit, as by the tensioned string and the taut, creased leather in his musical panel, or implied within his earlier twisted podforms, recurved bowls and the recent shoes. Balance too is crucial, both in individual lines and overall composition. The sensual aspect of the work is enhanced by the texture, finish and voluptuous curves of the wet-formed leather. (Lingwood described Garry's work as 'sumptuous' and possessing 'immense physical attractiveness.')

To all of this is added a keen sense of what Garry calls fantasy. He is strongly attracted to attics, old desks with secret compartments, old buildings with ramifying passageways and to things half-hidden, and endeavours to convey this feelingg in his work by employing openings and overhung spaces which demand that the viewer feel them or peek into them. Finally, he has a keen sense of the absurd, and has fun with the things he makes,

Sketch 1

Sketch 2



Bowl, wet-moulded in leather

Sketch 3

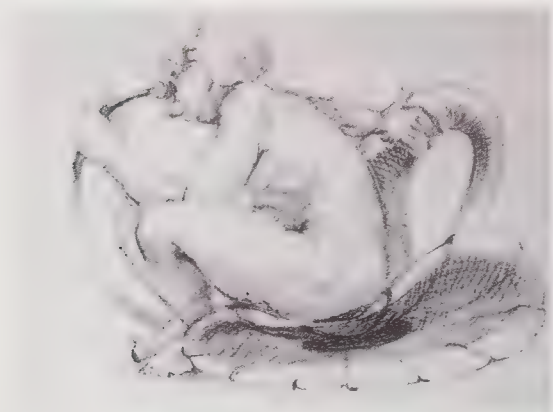
Sketch 4

hoping that the viewer will see the humour that he has put into them.

Granted these aesthetic preferences, the inevitable question arises, 'What shall I make?'. For several years, especially as he was exploring the properties and possibilities of wet-formed leather, he found inspiration in natural forms such as shells, seed pods, leaves or fungi. Later, an interest in stringed musical instruments led him in that direction, while a chance comment caused him to begin a series of wind instrument forms. His interest in life drawing led him to turn his hand to the human form, but a design problem "sidetracked" him into making the sculptured shoe forms that made up much of his most recent exhibition at Sydney's Australian Craftworks gallery.

The various sources of inspiration, filtered through personal aesthetics, produce a vision of an object that would be satisfying and enjoyable to make, but that vision, that concept, is a fragile thing. To draw a comparison, it seems akin to the feeling one gets upon reading a good novel, of being able to "see" the characters. The vision must lead to the next stage, that of design.

After visualising an object, Garry sets to work with



Sketch 5

pencil and paper to capture the line, tension, form and balancee of his imagination. He will know the design to be right when he sees it, and once he has it on paper he can set about exploring and extending it with related drawings as they suggest themselves. The drawings are by no means "blueprints" or "plans", and there is considerable variation in the degree to which he actually follows them. Sometimes he will gain inspiration by including in his working drawings things which he does not intend to make, but which serve to bring the object to greater life for him, and thus help to define its form. The design drawings also force him to consider which specific techniques will be required to fashion the piece in question.

Actual technique, (methods of working), as

'Legs', wall panel

Above: 'Horn'
Photography by Clive Jeffery

Shoes 1

Below: 'Body Panel', 150 x 100 cm

'Instrument Panel'

Detail of 'Instrument Panel'

Garry Greenwood's

LEATHER SCULPTURES

opposed to workmanship, (skill in using those methods), is an important part of Garry's creative process since, as Rex Lingwood says, '...despite the fact that leather is a very ancient material, there is little historical record of either objects or techniques to act as source material or as a stimulus for the development of the craft'. The fact that traditional techniques for working with the material are few has meant that Garry has had to extend and modify that which exists, and has also had to develop entirely new methods of his own devising in order to bend the material to his will. He definitely does not see technique as an end in itself it simply 'governs what you can and can't do', much as adequate vocabulary is required by an author in order to express his thoughts; and without it he would be unable to translate his vision and design into reality.

The person viewing this work for the first time is sometimes overwhelmed by the technical aspects of it. This is not suprising when confronted by leather objects whose forms do not match the usual expectations of the medium which are raised by exposure to traditional methods of work. Leather sheets have been formed into fantastic shapes. Laminated blocks and strips that look at first glance like wood have been carved into flowing three-dimensional curves and surfaces. There are both rigid and flexible leather tubes, bells or horns attached by leather screw threads, and sculpted human forms that one associates with other media. Faced with this, the viewer may well react by asking 'How does he do that?'

This reaction (and criticism deriving from it to the effect that the work is somehow "too technical") is however the viewer's problem, not the craftsman's. The form itself, embodying those aspects of vision and design discussed above, is the purpose of the work in the mind of its creator, the technique is merely a means to that end. His design work is not governed by the techniques at

Shoe 2

Mandolin 1

Below: Shoes 4

his disposal at that given moment; he first designs what he wants to make and only then considers practical aspects of construction. If he needs new ways of working he develops them as he goes.Unsuitable or inadequate techniques will detract from the form itself and spoil the work. Garry Greenwood's aim is to have the actual methods employed "disappear" into the work.

Closely allied to technique is execution, that is, the workmanship in effecting the technique. It has been stated that bad workmanship is simply that which detracts from the design or intention of the work, and the comment reflects Garry's view. Execution must be of the highest standard or else the form of the object would be spoiled just as it would through inadequate techniques. For example, he rarely employs stitching in his work (and when he does it is more for decorative effect, as in the "purfling" of a lute form, as opposed to structural necessity), but when he does he takes the greatest care in ensuring its regularity. Otherwise its raggedness would distract the eye from the curve he is trying to embellish.

Workmanship also implies a love of the actual doing of a task — of the use of fine tools in the cutting and shaping of the material and the feel and smell of the workpiece itself. Garry certainly feels this as acutely as any woodworker who loves the feel and sound of a well-tuned hand plane working on a surface, or any printmaker who loves the smell of the ink. Yet even in this appreciation of the manual aspect of the creative process one can see that the vision and design are always foremost in his mind. He does much of his work with a Stanley razor knife, making only a few passes with the blade before throwing it away and inserting a new one. The discarded blade is still quite sharp, but it has lost that initial keenness of edge by which the cutting is virtually effortless. In carving his sweeping curves, he wishes his hand to be an extension of his eye and mind. As soon as he is aware of the slightest pull in the blade, the illusion is destroyed.

This immediacy in effecting the design is perhaps another reason that leather so appeals to him as a medium. Harder and less forgiving materials like wood or metal or stone would force him to slower methods of work and the properties of the material would intrude into the direct relation between his design and his hands' action that he so prizes.

Garry's work has developed through several distinct phases, each phase catalysed by some technical innnovation which has allowed him to explore new forms and ideas. The violin panel, for example, was an important piece in that it was his first attempt at a musical instrument form, and one on which he tried many new techniques. The 'vogelyre trio' was the next project. One can clearly see him loosening up as he masters new methods of work. The 'vogelyres' led directly to instrument forms such as the mandolin. From these he progressed to rigid wind instrument forms (many of which had reeds and were capable of sound) and hence to flexible horns as he explored the use of leather tubes. It was at this stage that he decided to do something with the human form and indulge his long-standing interest in life drawing.

The design finally put to paper showed a figure holding a flexible leather horn similar to the ones he had been making. (Designs for these previous works had included sketched human forms, often involved in unspeakable ways with the snake-like horns themselves.) Both figure and horn were partially hidden behind tautly-stretched leather. The design incorporated tension (in the stretched leather covering), fantasy (in that the human and musical forms were half-hidden), sensuality (in the relation between figure and horn), line and balance (inherent in the entire work) and not a little humour. The extended human form was a new problem, although Garry had sculpted hands before, and various technical difficulties had to be overcome to fabricate it and to secure the leather cover. Characteristically, the technical problems were overcome during the actual execution of the work. The object was finished with his usual care and he began plans for the next piece, the legs panel.

This panel was well in progress to a rather flexible design when an aesthetic problem arose. How to finish the line of the legs? The answer came at a party a few days later when he saw a woman in very high heels . . . outlandish shoes were the answer. So a pair of spike-heeled shoes had to be made, even if they were to be mostly hidden. The finished panel worked well enough, with his criticism being that the covering of the legs in bookbinder's hide had, thin though it was, increased their diameter to a point where he was not happy with their proportions. But the shoes! Here was a whole new idea. So problems in design and execution had affected his vision and he headed off in a new direction, not abandoning but simply postponing explorations of the human form.

Soon he was at his drawing board designing outlandish shoe forms. The initial pair had been "shoes" in that they were made to go on the sculpted foot, but these new works were rather shoe-derived shapes, absolutely unwearable without a drastic restructuring of the human foot. Often toes were visible, mashed up inside, while the heel socket was empty. The exaggerated and flamboyant lines pleased him, as did the possibilities for expression of tension inherent in toes tightly crammed into too-narrow a space under tightly-stretched uppers. There was also ample scope for indulging his sense of the absurd. The insane things that humans have put on their feet over the centuries provided a mine of inspiration. In addition, they were involving forms for the viewer. Everyone wears shoes and all can imagine their feet in such devices. Finally there was the joy of fantasy — the sheer fun of making a pair of "rocking boots" with silver bells on their outrageously-extended toes. At the same time colour played an increasingly important role. He first used a bright colour pattern on a pair of shoes to brighten a particularly dreary stretch of winter weather, and found that the shoe form could happily tolerate it whereas he felt that much of his earlier work could not.

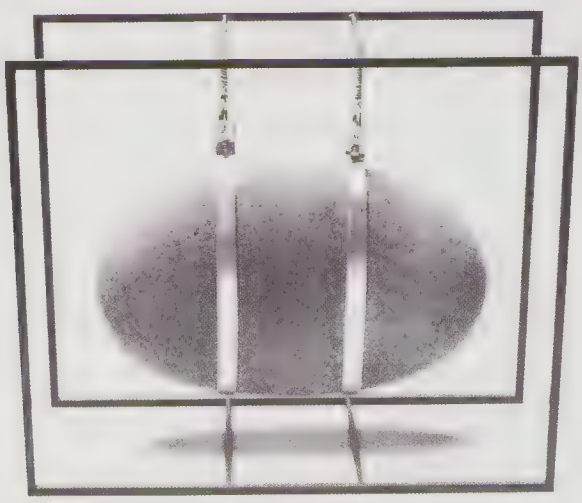
At present Garry Greenwood is beginning to think about making several instruments, both string and wind, to be utilised as the inspiration for an actual muscial and dance performance to be written around the sounds they can make and the forms they have. He looks forward to extending leather into yet another untraditional area, that of performance, with the leather instruments inspiring new sound and movement rather than being governed by those with which we are familiar.

And what of other work to come? Though I can conjure a structured representation of his creative process, it is only a way of helping me to impose order on those works which already exist. The pathways of creation — his or anyone else's — remain ineffable. We will just have to wait and see. That's the wonder of it.

Dr. S. Gottschalk

Photography by Oliver Strewe

John Davis, 'Journey Extended', 1982. Constructed from eucalyptus twigs, bamboo, canvas, paper, driftwood and tar, 610 x 57 x 56 cm

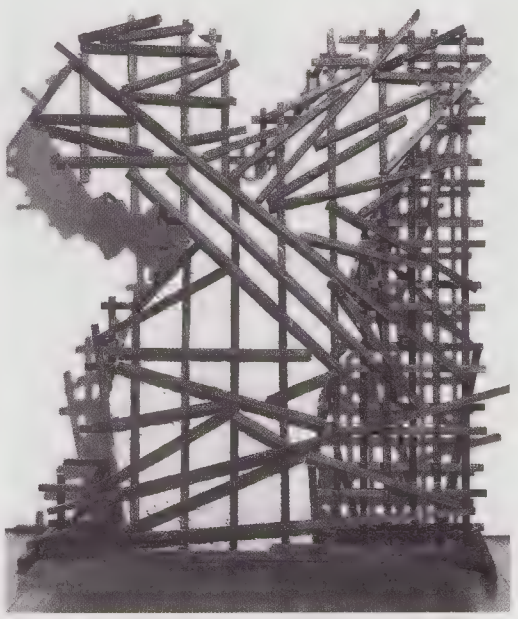


ASIAN INTERFACE

AUSTRALIA-JAPAN

THIS exhibition was an investigation that proceeded from the work of four outstanding contemporary artists. Their art is an investigation into an identity in which Australian and Japanese culture are important elements. But I do not wish to extrapolate general statements on two 'cultures' or 'traditions'. It means little to speak of 'the Japanese tradition' or 'indigenous Australian art' in this context.

Why then the title 'Asian Interface'? It came through a specific occasion. The exhibition was this gallery's contribution to a conference on the theme at the Art Gallery of N.S.W. in September. Jackie Menzies, Curator in Asian Art, who designed an historical exhibition for the



Mitsuo Shoji, 'Sculpture 1', 1983. Clay, masonite board, timber, clay slip, burnt with blow torch

Carlier Makigawa, Small Sculpture with suspended stone (part of a series of eight objects), 1983. Blue steel frame, thread, copper wire, leather and pebble, 20 x 10 cm

occasion, invited me to examine the theme in relation to contemporary arts. This provided the occasion and the challenge.

I began to explore evidence of Asian influences in Australian art and crafts: the Japanese cum Leach tradition in pottery, Indonesian batik, Indian-inspired relics of sixties hip culture, kiminos, handmade paper, calligraphy and many more examples of 'borrowed' images and processes. It pointed to the gallery being full of objects with a superficial 'oriental' character. I found that it begged the question 'interface = mutual relation' (OED). I was seduced by 'borrowed' visual symbols without a clear appreciation of the aesthetic and cultural base. I left aside the large question and proceeded from a different premise.

What is Australia's place in Asia today? No longer

John Davis working on 'Journey Extended' at Kanemata Foon, Japan

Detail of 'Journey Extended' by John Davis

Carlièr Makigawa, Small Sculpture, 1983

Detail of 'Journey Extended' by John Davis

can we see ourselves exclusively as an island of western culture in this region. This exhibition narrowed the scope to two major countries *in* Asia — Australia and Japan. It is not based on assumptions of an East-West dichotomy, nor does it emphasise oriental influences *on* Australian art. Recent years have seen a dialogue and cross-fertilisation of ideas develop between Australian and Japanese art, evidenced by exchange visits of artists and exhibitions. There is a recognition of mutual concerns and sensibilities — towards nature, materials, traditions. This exhibition sought to explore some features of this modern interface.
It was a specific exhibition; an investigation. The four artists share mutual concerns, but have divergent backgrounds and perceptions. Each knows and respects the others' work. The four create their own interface: two are Japanese, two Australian; two are placed in a 'sculpture' tradition, two a 'craft' tradition. But the frame of reference for presenting their work together

Inset above: Carlier Makigawa, Small Sculpture (part of a series of eight objects), 1983. Blue steel frame, bamboo, thread and pebble

Carlier Makigawa, Small Sculpture, 1983

Mitsuo Shoji, 'Sculpture 2' 1983, installed at the Crafts Council Centre, Sydney

takes the interface beyond tired debates on East-West or Art-Craft axes. The very absence of these defining criteria makes a statement about their inappropriate usage in some cases today. 'Asian Interface' may help us to reassess our perceptions of contemporary arts in Australia.
John Davis' 'Journey Extended' is a powerful and evocative work. The boat-like structure, reinforcing the image of journey, stretched across the gallery floor. The journey/discovery image is significant. John has moved through a series of styles and materials — wood carving, industrial processes, video, to his recent 'bush' constructions — but there has been a consistent exploration of environment and our 'Australianness'. His extensive world travel — absorbing experiences of other cultures — has not diminished this concern.
'Journey Extended' is also specifically about a journey between Australia and Japan in 1982. Half the work was made in Australia from materials collected in his familiar Victorian forests and

Akio Makigawa, 'Water Installation 1', 1982. Series of drawings with stone and water

lakes — the blackened tarred form nursing delicate eucalyptus twig structures. The other half was made in Tokoname where John searched the desolate beach for sticks and timbers, bleached and weathered white. Both sections have a uniqueness and a harmony; the harshness of weathering — black and white, fire and water — balanced by delicate structures with archaeological and architectural references, subtle earth hues and textures.

The journey is also a passage through life and death which relies, in John's art, on an appreciation of, and harmony with, the patterns and ecological systems of Nature. For John's art expresses a wonderful sensed feeling of landscape, an understanding of the formal relations of Nature and the beauty of humble bushland fragments. It is not surprising that he is respected in Japan as an Australian 'bush artist', a sympathetic spirit in his way of seeing and feeling landscape.

Akio Makigawa grew up in a family that practised the classical arts of Japan. But his own art developed chiefly from the impact of the Australian environment — the bleached landscape of the western coast. 'Water Installation I' is a wonderfully still and contemplative work. It draws the viewer into its spaces, to engage in an exploration of its images and related parts, the beauties and mysteries of the elements — stone, water, air, to move through the work to discover the play of parallel and converging lines, the weight of stone, the evocative gestural marks of the drawings.

If the stone is the power of water, its dualities explored in the two horizontal drawings, the six vertical drawings examine the visual illusion of water and air, a line of light refracted as it hits water. This bent line is reflected in the water channels on the floor. The water in the channels remains the essence, its significance indicated by its very understatement, the point of reference to all other elements in the work.

Carlier Makigawa's small structures are microcosms of experience — 'a fragment of nature in a space of man'. Each work captures and orders elements within a steel frame; suspended fragments — bound, wrapped, isolated — pebbles, twigs, fibres, paper, skin. These elements are taken out of their environment and ordered into a new relation, a new 'reality' by the artist. But this arrangement does not seem a violation, it becomes a means to investigate and contemplate intrinsic beauties and mysteries.

'My works', says Mitsuo Shoji, 'represent two concepts, myself in relation to the two cultures which I span — English and Japanese — and myself in relation to our inevitable passage through life'. The human condition dominates Mitsuo's new work; the body — trapped, sectioned, burnt, layered, isolated in beauty and decay. The body in tension, but also in repose, inseparable from the layered structure surrounding it — our social and physical condition.

Mitsuo's forms also draw upon a significant image beyond the figurative. The ceramic form is layered and cross sectioned by timbers in a matrix of vertical and horizontal lines. The clay walls of Japanese houses use timber struts and reinforcements to hold the clay. As it weathers and decays the timber scaffolding is exposed, jutting across and through the form.

Trial by fire is an important symbol for Mitsuo. He is both fascinated and annoyed by the kiln-fired process because works are finished beyond his control.

Mitsuo uses a strong blow torch directly on his work. His ceramic paintings have a directness and spontaneity with a serenity that comes from an aesthetic sureness and sensitivity.

There were four independent artists in 'Asian Interface'; each has a unique perception and sensibility. There are, however, several mutual concerns and motifs in their work.

Their work is investigative and analytical. It is not didactic or monolithic, nor is it passive or naive. There is a common spirit of critical inquiry into phenomena — sections, layers, grids, investigations into parts of a whole. This analytical approach is not inconsistent with the general mood of contemplation and repose. Each work has a stillness and resolution. There are tensions and dualities — black and white, life and death, man and nature, air and water, fire and body. These are not contradictions, but statements of mutual relation.

There is a sense of ritual in the work, expressed in the ritualised processes of binding, wrapping, ordering, arranging infinite variations on a theme. There is a ceremonial character to these formal arrangements, an impression of rites and rituals.

The rite of passage is a recurring motif; the image of journey and discovery. We are invited to travel through, along and around the works, to explore layers of meaning. There are no obvious topical social or political references, more a timeless rite of passage — through trials of fire, water, air and earth — examining the self in relation to passing of time and the elements — weathered, burnt, exposed, impermanent. These are not abstract concerns, but highly emotive and personalised, demanding human engagement. We explore and identify, memories of experience, vulnerabilities, sensuality, pause in the spaces to look at the whole, dwell on the minute to appreciate the detail.

The physical scale and site of the works takes them out of an object-orientated gallery context. The size of works is not all important, more often significance is indicated by understatement — a channel of water, a wrapped pebble, a twig structure, a fire-cracked section. Colour, too, is much understated. There is a dominance of black, white, grey — not negatives, but enhancement for the subtle tonal shifts and significance of colour when used — a thin pencil line, a tiny painted stick.

The communion between man and nature is a dominant concern, for it is nature that harmonises tensions and dualities. There is a shared concern with natural materials and investigations into the beauty and mystery of humble fragments. We see no violation in their displacement, ordered and arranged into new ways of seeing and understanding.

The work in this exhibition indicates a finely attuned aesthetic — a rare restraint, simplicity and sensitivity to materials, forms and symbols. Each work evolves from a set of complex elements, but no one element dominates. They are resolved through a felt sense of purpose and place. We are given the essence.

Step outside traditional assumptions — East-West, Art-Craft, Subject-Object and contemplate the work of four artists. In the finest sense of an aesthetic it opens our senses to fresh ways of seeing, feeling and knowing. If 'culture' is a felt sense of the quality of life, the identity of self in relation to place, time and nature, then 'Asian Interface' may enhance understanding of our culture today.

Dr Peter Emmett
Director, Crafts Councils Centre Gallery

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Jeannie Baker, 'Woolworth Tower' (print detail). Tower of Woolworth Building, Manhattan, NY, 1983. Relief collage, DAS clay, veneer, paint, fabric and hair, 49 x 31 cm

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THE 'Australian Craft' Gallery has been open since mid-1982. Located at Southport on Queensland's Gold Coast, it fulfills a unique role that goes beyond the operation of a gallery, and has brought something new into the area. It is the product of decisons made by Robert and Rita Hughes who met while doing community arts work in Victoria. They are totally committed to seeing those dreams and decisions fulfilled.

Rita is Gallery Director, while Robert sees his role as peripheral to the running of the Gallery. His main interest is in community arts and he sees 'Australian Craft' as providing a focus for high quality craft goods as well as performing a social role in the area by acting as a growing arts lobby group. Before moving to Queensland Robert was director of the Footscray Community Arts Centre in Victoria, where Rita worked as an activities co-ordinator. She has combined her secretarial training with a strong interest in the arts which has now culminated in the operation of 'Australian Craft'.

The gallery area is 1000 square feet in total, and the exhibition space is half of that. A very active schedule has resulted in twenty events held there per year. The exhibition program offers one major and one minor event per month, excepting December and January. Major events in the later part of 1983 are showing of work by Jeff Micham, Terry Sedgwick, a Survey of Jewellery, Stanislav Mellis, and Scott Avery. The 1984 program includes a February invitational exhibition of local professional craftspeople and a number of one-person events featuring Queensland as well as interstate people.

Rita has found that ceramics, followed by glass and wood are the major local interest areas. She feels public response has been good and continues to grow at a remarkable pace. In a sense the Gallery may be seen as a symbol of a way of life previously not well served in the area, but certainly one that is desired — that is, one rich in cultural experience.

The Hughes' philosophy towards 'Australian Craft' is expressed by them: 'To catalyse and stimulate both the market place and local craftspeople by the maintenance of a professionally run gallery which does not compromise in its contribution to the promotion and marketing of craftworks nor in its demand for a high standard of work. The Gallery was established to make a positive contribution to the craftworld on a national basis, not simply on a regional or state level.'

Already it has acted as the catalyst for the formation of a group of professional craftsepeople called Crafts Gold Coast. They have now produced a map showing where studios and outlets may be found in the area. They hope to stage a Crafts Expo in 1984, conduct workshops, and attract more public awareness to artists and their role in the community. The great Craft Picnic of November, 1983 was also their concept — an outdoor community craft event well suited to the Gold Coast lifestyle.

Happily, an increasinging number of nationally known craftspeople are now able to list 'Australian Craft' as their Queensland gallery outlet. And these are people who are able to be selective as well as selected. Thus the contribution on all levels — regional, state and national may indeed be seen as a positive one for the Gallery.

Janet De Boer

GALLERIES AND EXHIBITORS

Galleries and Exhibitors is a new feature in *Craft Australia* that aims to provide exposure for work which is either on exhibition at the time of publication or has been exhibited during the quarter of the year preceding publication. It is open to craftspeople, galleries (national, regional and private), organisations and guilds that submit the following information: name of exhibitor (maker), title of work (if titled), media, technique, materials used, dimensions, year of execution. Name of gallery (or venue) where shown, opening and closing dates of the exhibition. Individual crafts people submitting photographs of work must include one of the following: exhibition announcement, press release, catalogue, or letter of verification from sponsor or gallery. Only good quality black and white prints of professional standard will be considered for publication and only when correspondingly labeled with maker's name, title, media, technique, dimensions and date of execution. Photographers will be credited when names are supplied. Photographs will be returned after three months if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

ARTHUR ROSSER

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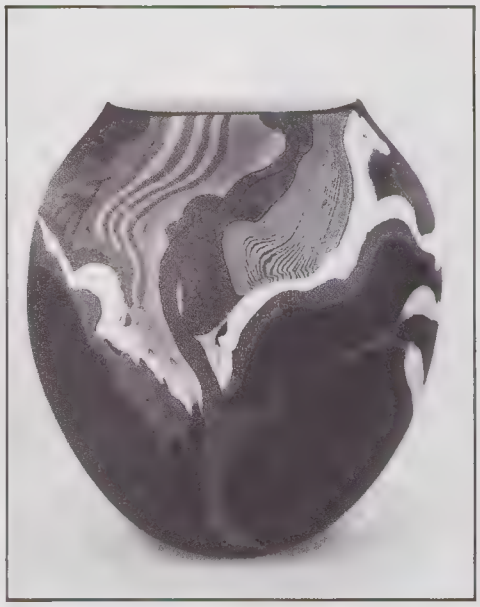

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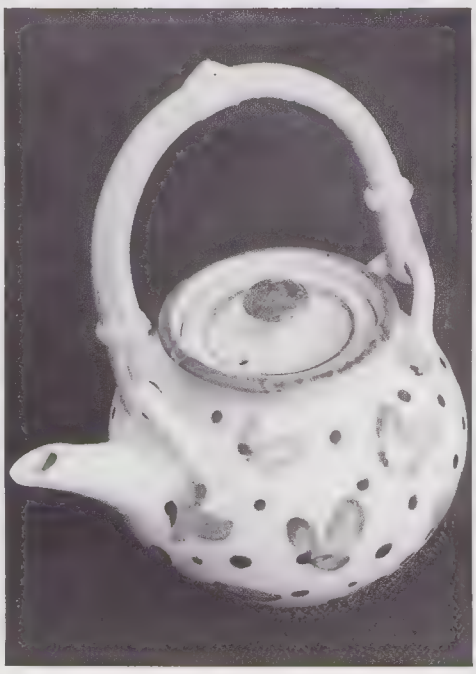

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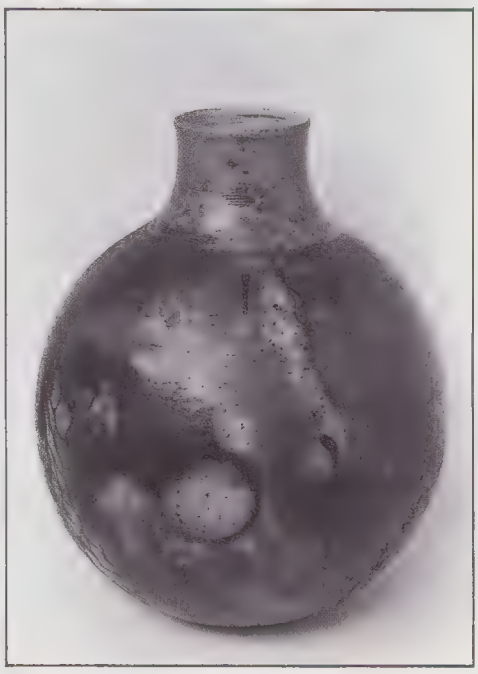

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1 **CAROL ROSSER,** *Storage Jar,* ash glaze with incised decoration, ht 32 x 20 cm, shown at Beaver Galleries, Red Hill, Canberra (9 Oct-29 Oct)

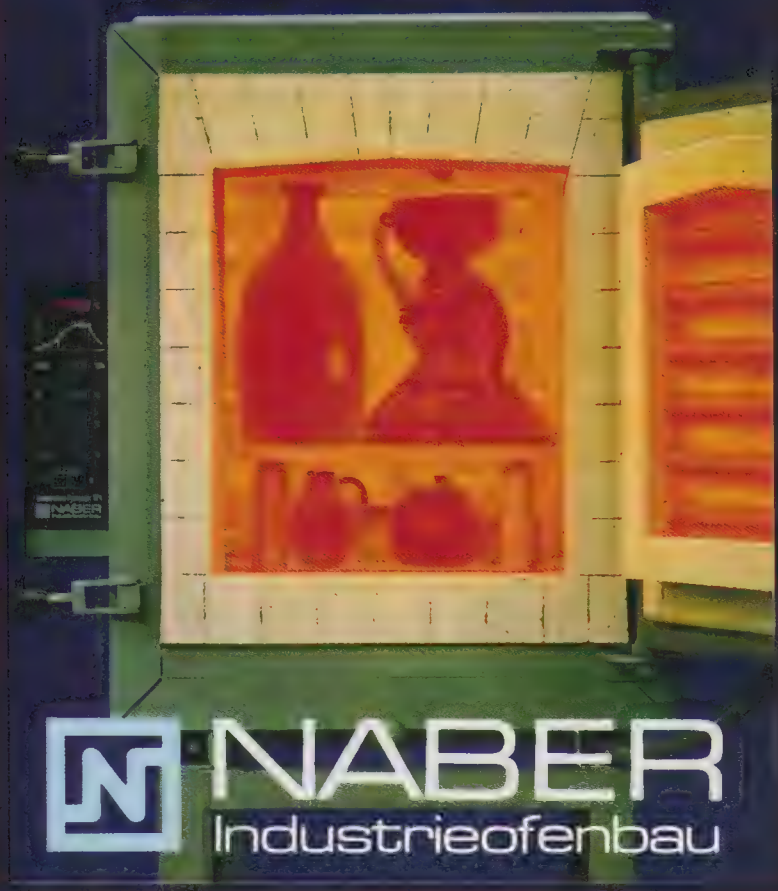
2 **SONY MANNING,** *Porcelain Vase,* slipcast, incised and inlaid decoration, ht 10.5 x 8.5 cm. Executed September, 1983, shown at Aladdin Gallery, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney (22 Sept-15 Oct).

3 **CHRIS SANDERS,** *Flat Lidded Jar,* thrown, copper/red glaze, ht 30 x 26 cm. Executed September, 1983, shown at Aladdin Gallery, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney(22 Sept-15 Oct).

4 **JEFF MINCHAM,** *Small Jar,* stoneware decorated with oxides, raku fired, ht 13 x 13 cm. Executed April 1983, shown at Cook's Hill Galleries, Newcastle, NSW (9 Sept-27 Sept).

5 **GAIL BARWICK,** *Tea Pot,* stoneware, ht 16 cm. Executed September 1983, shown at Elmswood Fine Crafts, Unley, SA (9 Oct-29 Oct).

6 **RAY TAYLOR,** *Large Raku Pot,* Readers Digest prize winner 1983, shown at 'The Royal Adelaide Show Craft Awards' organised by the Crafts Council of South Australia (2 Sept-10 Sept).



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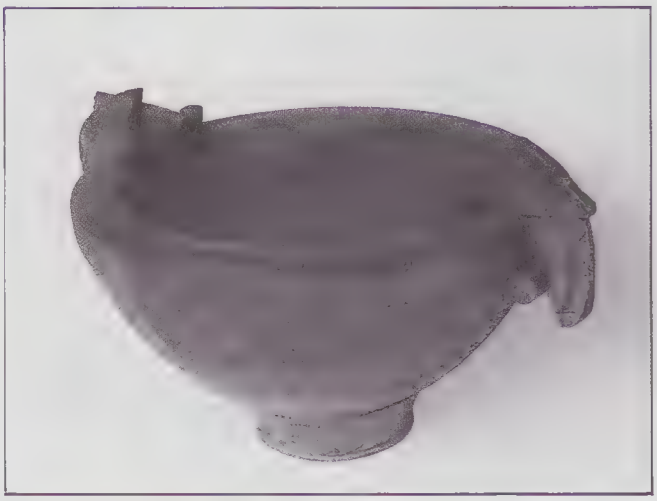
7 **JEFF MINCHAM,** *Raku Form,* Judge's comments: 'Highly Commended'. Shown at 'The Royal Adelaide Show Craft Awards' organised by the Crafts Council of South Australia (2 Sept-10 Sept).

8 **LEONG CHAN,** *'Faceless Heroes One',* screen print on callico, 140 x 85 cm, shown at Roundhouse Gallery, UNSW, Kensington, Sydney (13 Sept-23 Sept).

9 **ALAN SCHOULTZ,** *Mushrooms,* wood sculpture turned from one piece of jacaranda, ht 100 cm, shown at 'Woodcraft 83', OTC House, Martin Place, Sydney (3 Oct-15 Oct).

10 **ROBERT MACRAE,** *Shoulder Bag,* hand-stitched blue and grey leather. Judge's comments: 'Highly Commended', shown at 'The Royal Adelaide Show Crafts Awards' organised by the Crafts Council of South Australia (2 Sept-10 Sept).

11 **SANDRA BLACK,** *Perforated Bowl,* unglazed porcelain, ht 5 x 12 cm, on show in 'Aspects of Australian Craft', Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Stage 1, Power House Museum (early November until the December 1984).



7

JULIE BROWN

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LEWIS MORLEY

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10

GREG PIPER

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12

FENN HINCHCLIFFE

13

12 **GUDRUN KLIX,** *'Rukk/Kathedra',* sculptural installation, ceramics, wood, sand, 2 x 1 x 1 m, to be shown at Gryphon Gallery, Carlton, Victoria (27 Feb-16 March 1984)

13 **JEN BUTLER,** *'Abreast A Series — Sculpture 1',* laminated wood, paint and plastic, 80 x 73 x 25 cm. Executed 1983, shown at The Bloomfield Galleries, Paddington, NSW (9 July-26 July).

14 **ARNOLD BLACK,** *Lute,* soundboard of German spruce; ribs, neck overlay and pegbox of European flamed maple, with plum and jelutong. On exhibition in 'Aspects of Australian Craft', Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Stage 1, Power House Museum, Ultimo, Sydney (early November through to December 1984).

15 **HIROSHIMA DESIGN GROUP,** *'Hung Wave',* silk garment, machine and hand-sewn, 1983, shown in 'East/West Exhibition' at Roundhouse Gallery, UNSW, Kensington, Sydney (13 Sept-23 Sept).

16 **TONY HANNING,** *'Waterlily Bowl',* glass, flashed, sand-blasted; acid polished, 1982, ht 19.7 cm, on exhibition in 'Aspects of Australian Craft', Stage 1, Power House Museum, Ultimo, Sydney (early November through to December 1984).

17 **VINCE RAY,** *'Dreamtime Landscape',* free-standing ceramic sculpture, wood, fibre and paint, ht 40 x 60 cm, shown at Market Row Gallery, Clarence Street, Sydney (21 Oct-24 Nov).

GREG PIPER

14

JULIE BROWN

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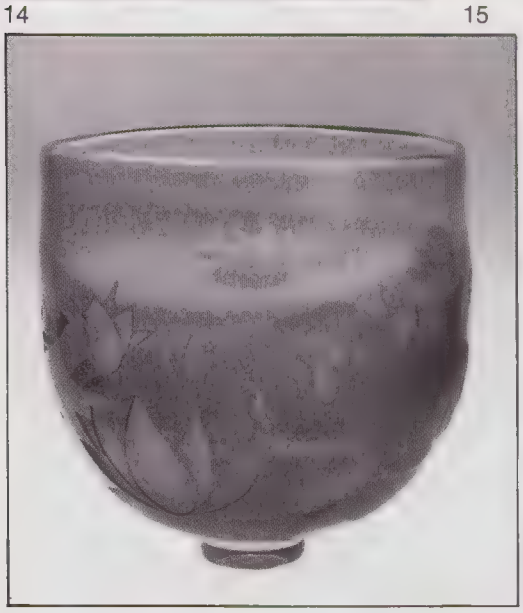

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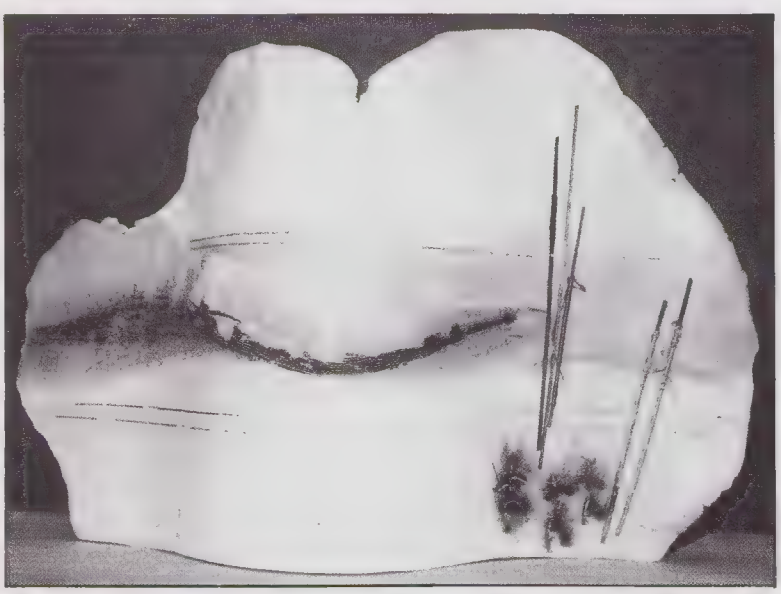

REG HARDY

17

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Above: 'Christ the Shepherd and Fisherman of Men', leadlight and painted window, 1962, St. Andrew's College, Sydney University

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GIANT GLASS MURAL

A MAGNIFICENT mosaic mural covering three walls has been constructed at the Glendonald School for Deaf Children in Melbourne. The Work took nine months to complete and features more than 20,000 pieces of coloured glass and mirrors which were supplied by Yencken Sandy Glass Industries as a community service donation.

The mural, designed by Adrian Gemelli, represents a significant milestone in art glasswork in Australia. It is the first of its kind to be undertaken under the Victorian Government sponsored Artists-in-Schools Program and was officially unveiled by the Minister for Arts, Mr Race Mathews.

The mural is of special significance to the children. Its theme — Storm at Sea — was chosen in consultation with them by the artist, Adrian Gemelli. To commemorate the completion of the work, a special bottle containing the names of all the children at the school was incorporated into the design.

During the course of the work, the mural was expanded in size from its original dimensions of 1.8 m x 1.2 m to approximately 12.2 m x 5.3 m. It now covers three walls of the main stairwell in the school, reaching from the floor to the ceiling on each wall, as well as incorporating floor to ceiling window space.

Artist Adrian Gemelli in front of his completed glass mural at the Glendonald School for Deaf Children, Melbourne

Its three-dimensional aspects are a dominant feature along with reflected light which interplays with the visuals. Laminated mirrors suspended from the ceiling oscillate with the movement of air to increase the play of light and give greater depth to the work.

Commenting on its creativity, Yencken Sandy's Sales Manager, Tony Hine, said the mural was one of the most innovative glass artworks he had seen. 'It would be almost impossible to put a price tag on it. But if one had to, it would run into tens of thousands of dollars,' he said.

The sheer quantity of different types of glass used in the mural's construction would amount to a substantial amount of money.

Apart from the extensive use of silver and gold bevelled mirrors, there are countless pieces of stained glass from some of America's leading art glass manufacturers. Spectrum, Merry-go-round, Blenko and Uroboros are a few of the new art glasses used. These were combined to contrast with the bevelled mirrors and the mosaic flat mirrors to achieve many of the features of the theme.

Although Adrian Gemelli did not use the full potential of the rainbow coloured surfaces and translucency of the glasses, he relied on their irridescent qualities to assist in the composition and texture of the clouds and water aspects of the theme. However, in the three-dimensional aspects, the translucent properties of the glass were achieved.

Etching was used to change the surface of some of the mirrors and produce a flat silvered look. Glass fusion techniques were also employed.

Adrian Gemelli devoted considerable time to achieving special effects with innovative techniques and spent many hours consulting with several authorities before choosing a contact adhesive which was coloured by iron oxide. In all areas, the base structure was scored for greater strength in laminating.

K.L.

FUTURE FIBRE

An exhibition at Ivan Dougherty Gallery, City Art Institute, Sydney 3-24 September, 1983.

Heather Dorrough, suspended panel

MICHAEL Esson, curator of the exhibition 'Future Fibre', states that the common denominator of the show is fibre. Perhaps this is too simplistic because on entering the gallery, discovery and death permeate the senses to such a degree that the common denominator becomes mystery. The feeling of mystery is enhanced by effective use of light and shadow.

Of the ten artists only one, Robert Bell, is male and only one, Nola Jones, could be classed as being traditional in both her use of material and concept. Several of the artists are exhibiting some old works but, in the context of all the works which allude to a feeling of timelessness, this does not detract from the overall exhibition.

All of the pieces are three-dimensional to some degree and utilise a wide range of media and techniques, from papermaking, weaving, painting and printing to stitchery and wrapping. Some of the works are small and jewel-like in intensity while others are large and monumental in effect.

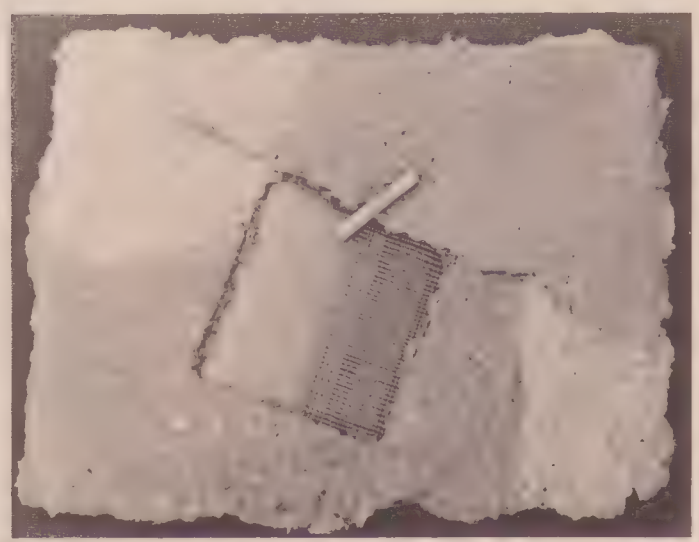
Whether it is due to the curator's obsession or the artists' fixations, the repetitive subject matter is that of covering, layering and enveloping. With these processes the artists express their inner feelings and present needs.

Moi Moi Tan, 'Bijik-Bijik'

In Robert Bell's 'Sipario' a length of black taffeta weighted with small crosses is strung across the wall supported by a row of boards. In front of this stands 'Colonna', a pillar wrapped in black. The works seen together form a cross. Although strong in visual impact, the pieces lack in execution. The potential of bought materials manipulated in unexpected ways — sailcloth as a shroud, knotted strips of lead, inverted coathangers — is not realised. Like torture instruments from the Spanish Inquisitions, however, they remain objects of fascination.

Like Bell's 'Sipario', one of Heather Dorrough's images of herself is an open shroud, a view of the final sanctum of a human being. Dorrough, in her present search for the inner self, has in this exhibition made the most dramatic, if least inspiring, statement of her personal confrontation. She has made only a token gesture to her visual material by pinning her veil to the floor with four spools of cotton. The work is tough in each of the single images but weak in its totality as it traces the body covered to the body bare, exploding for all to see.

Unlike Dorrough's obsession with self destruction, Jutta Feddersen explores the meaning of life through images of death. She writes: 'My concern with these works was "end of civilisation". Accordingly I tried to protect humans — animals — nature.' A group of wrapped figures, some in specimen cases, refer to the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust. The 'Mumien', particularly Number 15, are



Beth Hatton, Pavement Study

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Jutta Feddersen, 'Mumien Series'

contained compositions with a hint of eternity and perhaps hope as seen more clearly in the white covered sticks of another 'Mumien'. The pieces suggest the continuity of human experience of suffering and destruction. The work is controlled, intricate and executed with a fineness and creativity which is lacking in the 'Skin of the Earth' Series concurrently on show at the Roslyn Oxley Gallery.

Away from death but still in the world of discovery, are Beth Hatton and Jenny Toynbee-Wilson's limited editions using handmade paper. Apart from the use of paper, however, these artists' works differ quite dramatically. Hatton's 'Pavement Study' series is formalised, stylised and controlled. The pavement-like squares, sealed behind perspex, come alive with touches of colour. Fragments of woven material are embedded in the paper as well as grids, mesh and aspects of linear definitions. The works beg for closer scrutiny to uncover the gentle uses of materials, shapes and lines.

Toynbee-Wilson's work is less formal in its imagery and takes its colours and feeling from nature, from the Australian landscape. Toynbee-Wilson forms paper pulp into sheets then into complex laminated layers while wet. The layers are then manipulated. The 'Message Obscured' series is freer than Hatton's and the elements of discovery and mystery are in the paper itself. Empty scrolls suggesting map cylinders or animal burrows are attached to an earthy paper base showing faint traces of grids, stitched, coloured, embossed. 'Bias', the largest work which is made up of a pattern of squares, has a spontaneous and bleached quality about it. Marked by trails criss-crossing its surface, it also contains hidden landscape qualities.

In this less sombre vein are the works by Moi Moi Tan, Linda Watt and Jocelyn Jackson. All three use the mystery of colour and movement as easily as the materials incorporated in the works. In her recent pieces Moi Moi Tan has been interested in the way that components can be half hidden and half revealed by their structure. Her work is probably the most whimsical in the show. Like Jacks-in-the-box, the intertwined worm-like configurations seem to come to life and want to roll, colourfully, onto the floor. The pieces relate to Tan's first experience of Australian flora and fauna.

The strength in Linda Watt's work is in the combination of materials and the way in which they are exposed. Mesh, buttons, incisions, holes and layers of fabric give an air of mystery and delight as the eye moves from one work to another. The small scale and sensual qualities of thread and cloth create an intimacy with the viewer. Joins attempt to open yet remain closed; desire is tempered by constraint.

In much the same intricate way Jocelyn Jackson covers her sticks with coloured materials, stain and paint which contrast very effectively with architectural photographs of the sticks and shadows cast by the lighting. The sticks, although placed in meticulous order, exude a sense of freedom and movement. Living in an inner Sydney suburb Jackson is interested in elements

Nola Jones, 'Red Presence', sisal and cotton, 207 x 140 cm. Photo: Jo Sando

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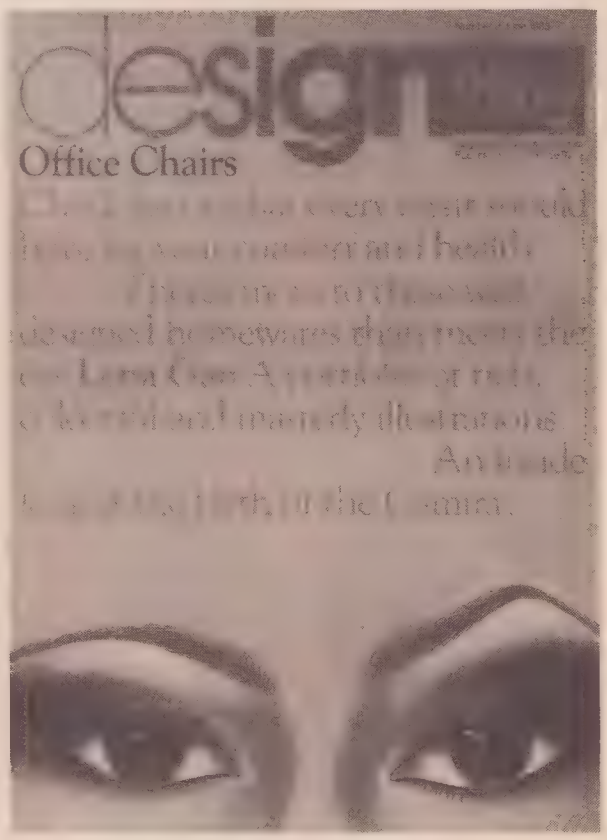

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Ascraft Fabrics CRAFT WRITING AWARD 1984

PURPOSE OF THE AWARD

To encourage consistent and authoritative writing on the subject of crafts in order to raise awareness of this area of the arts throughout the community, and to provide objective and useful criticism for craftsmen.

THE SPONSOR

Ascraft Fabrics is a Sydney based firm which specialises in importing hand-loomed and hand-printed furnishing fabrics. Joyce Burnard, who founded Ascraft Fabrics is herself a professional journalist.

THE AWARD

1. *The Award, consisting of a cash prize of $1,000 is offered to an individual who, in the opinion of the judges provides the most consistent and authoritative published writing on the subject of crafts over one year.*
2. *Entries must include at least two separately published articles. These may be features on individual craftsmen, critical reviews, general features on craft philosophy, general survey articles on the state of the crafts within Australia, and other related topics.*
3. *Entries must have been written and published within Australia in publications that are of nationally known stature, though not necessarily distributed nationally. These can be city, country or suburban newspapers, magazines and journals.*
4. *The award is open to journalists and to freelance writers whose work has been accepted for publication in the type of newspaper or magazine indicated above.*

THE RULES

1. *All entries must have been published during the year ending August 31, 1984.*
2. *Accompanying each entry should be:*
   (a) tear sheets or photostats of published material;
   (b) a signed declaration of the article's originality.
3. *The Award will be presented at a suitable venue.*
4. *Entries will only be returned after judging if requested.*
5. *Entries should be forwarded by September 15, 1984 to:*
   The Crafts Council of Australia,
   100 George Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000
6. *Members of the staff of the Crafts Council of Australia and of Ascraft Fabrics are excluded from participating in the Award.*

THE JUDGING

Entries will be judged on the significance of their contribution made to the whole body of writing on the subject of crafts, on consistency (in terms of steady output), authority (in terms of research and insight), and on the writing quality of the work presented.

The judging panel will consist of a representative of Ascraft Fabrics, the President of the Crafts Council of Australia, a person with a broad understanding of the arts and of literary ability, and a senior journalist. The editor of 'Craft Australia', the official journal of the Crafts Council of Australia, will also be included on the panel of judges.

The judges' decision will be final.

ENTRY SLIP ASCRAFT FABRICS ANNUAL CRAFT WRITING AWARD

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I hereby declare that my entry is my original work and aside from normal sub-editorial treatment has not been assisted in any way.

Signature of entrant .....

(Mail to: Crafts Council of Australia, 100 George Street, Sydney, 2000 by September 15, 1983)

Jocelyn Jackson, 'Floor Sticks'

of the urban environment. Her 'Floor Stick' pieces started from observations of telephone wires, particularly the heavily wrapped lines where repair work was being done.

The works of the last two artists, Wendy Stavrianos and Nola Jones, are large in comparison to the rest of the exhibition and they have the most painterly quality about them. Nola Jones states: 'My current concern in the work is to express mood and feeling through the metaphor of single, powerful image.' Brightly wrapped tendrils spring in profusion from the woven base of her two tapestries, creating dense richly textured surfaces, owing much to the work of Romanian-born artists Peter and Ritzi Jacobi. Wendy Stavrianos is concerned with the meshing of landscape and the female form. Rejecting the frame for her canvases has given her freedom to explore structure, formed by manipulating her heavily painted fabric over pieces of wood. Although rich with colour and texture both Jones' and Stavrianos' works are rather cold and somehow do not fit as easily as the other works into the theme of discovery. Hanging at either end of the gallery, they do not seem integrated into the show.

Overall 'Future Fibre' is a pleasant discovery and rediscovery of old and new names. It is obvious that Michael Esson as curator has a large influence in the way the works are appreciated, and in the way the show can be classed as an exhibition. If this exhibition is an indication of the use of fibre in art, then that medium is in a very health state.

Joseph Eisenberg

Ascraft Writing Award Result

JUDGING took place on Monday, 10 October to elect the winner of the 1983 Ascraft Fabrics $1,000 prize for consistent, authoritative writing on the Crafts.

Although fewer entries were received than in previous years the standard was noticeably higher and the sources of material more diversified. Multiple entries were received from all States, excepting Queensland and the Northern Territory, and included submissions from academics, exhibition curators, free-lance writers, art critics and professional journalists.

Entries fell into two major categories: (a) authoritative articles by curators and academics which appeared in specialist publications; (b) informative criticisms and evaluative commentaries by professional journalists which appeared in metropolitan and regional newspapers. Because of the exceptional standard of entries in each category the judges elected two outright Award winners. These were Jenny Zimmer, Senior Lecturer in Art History at RMIT and Gillian Russell, a reporter specialising in craft writing with *The Examiner,* Launceston, Tasmania. Each winner received $500.

The judges were Joyce Burnard, journalist and Managing Director of Ascraft Fabrics of Sydney, Lenore Nicklin, feature writer with *The Bulletin,* and Ken Lockwood, editor of *Craft Australia.*

The Ascraft Writing Award was started in 1980 by Joyce Burnard to encourage journalists, critics and academics to concern themselves more deeply with the contemporary crafts in Australia so that a body of serious documentation will gradually develop. At the same time the Award aims to widen readership on craft material and increase public awareness of the underlying philosophy of the craft movement. The Ascraft writing prize is one of the most substantial journalist awards in Australia.

The Award presentation was made by Jill Wran on Friday, 21 October, at the Crafts Council Centre, 100 George Street, Sydney.

K. L.

Continued from page 54

BAIER-ROSE

Saving time is not the only role that a computer can play. It can also have an educative role for the designer who needs to develop skills in putting ideas down on paper. The best way to learn is by making as many drawings as possible, and the computer assists in evaluating hundreds of design variations within a relatively short time. Computers are also able to record these various stages of the design process, giving the designer an instant overview of the whole project.

Technical data can be stored in the computer for ready use. Easy access to a building's statistics can make a large design project much simpler. Information about floor plans, lighting, services and functions can all be recorded and used to refine an initial drawing. Programs on this scale are beginning to be developed specifically for use by smaller architectural and design companies.

But what of the creative potential of computers? As far as Chris Rose is concerned, while they will not replace a designer's creative skill, some computer technology provides material appropriate to his visual research technique. An example is the work he has done with computer imaging systems in which computers trace the patterns caused by colliding particles. Once again the technique is used to develop a set of design rules — while the particle collisions are random, the patterns created from collisions follow mathematical laws. These logistic ironies will not be readily apparent in the final design, but the designer's inspiration will be translated into an exciting finished work.

This is the essence of design skill. The designer must create a language which will then be comprehensible to those with no previous knowledge of that language. The language is based on a set of rules arising from the client's needs, the existing space and the integrity of the design itself. Finally the user public can look at a finished product and say: 'I don't know why, but it works'.

Nola Anderson

Continued from page 76

INSTRUMENTS

Woodcarving is a particular love of this instrument maker and his works often display elaborately carved heads. If he ever tired of instrument making, he thinks he'd do more carving. He has a valuable collection of old chisels collected while in England which he prefers to modern ones because they seem to do a better job.

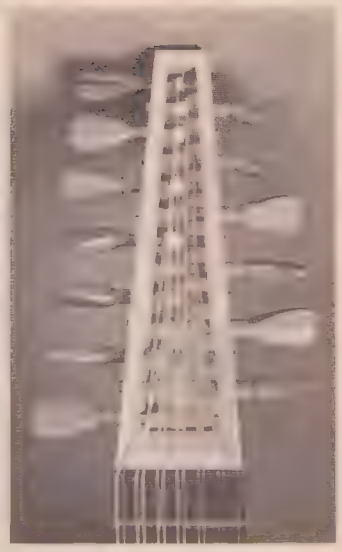
On the whole, Australian instrument makers work by themselves, although they are usually more than happy to share their knowledge. Apprentices are not always a clever idea says John Hall: 'If you're working with someone who's not as good as you then you spend all your time helping him. If he's as good as you'd like him to be — that is, as good as you are yourself — well then he wouldn't need to be there.'

One of the problems that seems to beset all makers is finding good sources of wood. Even those who use Australian timbers have difficulties. Arnold Black, who established his workshop in the Blue Mountains in 1979 with a grant from the Crafts Board, can sometimes find good local material, but says that most suitable native timbers just aren't available commercially.

Arnold Black is enthusiastic about native timbers. There are probably few other makers who consistently use so many woods in one instrument. One guitar he made uses native timbers only, and is light in construction with a full-bodied tone. The timbers include King William pine, crows ash, Tasmanian blackwood, black bean, Australian red cedar, silver ash and mulga.

Most people agree that King William pine is the only Australian timber suitable for soundboards (tops) which require a light springy wood. Arnold Black likes mulga for pegs because it turns nicely, looks good and is stable. But the reason makers use cetain woods is often a subjective thing. While there are some essential properties, hundreds of woods could be suitable for each part of an instrument, and makers tend to develop their own preferences for some woods over others.

Lutenist Max Hynam plays a Peter Biffen lute. Whatever timber is used, Hynam believes it is essential that the maker understand its sound-producing qualities. This is the craftsmanship which will mean the difference between a good and not-so-good instrument. Gauging the thickness of the top



Arnold Black, Lute

of a lute or guitar is crucial. John Hall's description of the process is that it aims 'to reduce timber thicknesses and sizes to an absolute minimum consistent with the stability of the instrument. It is here that the maker's experience is vital. No two pieces of timber are the same. All must be evaluated and cut according to an understanding of how their use will contribute to performance.'

"Thicknessing" is done from the back with small thumb planes. Bending the wood for a rib-backed instrument or for the side walls of a guitar is achieved with a bending iron: a curved, hollow block of metal with a heating element inside. The wood is placed in front of the heat and flexed. Lutes are often made on solid moulds, and guitars may be made using moulds that fit either inside or outside the side walls. Arnold Black prefers not to use any mould for his guitars, just an assembly board. He thinks that moulds can encourage sloppy bending techniques because the wood can be sprung into shape against the mould rather than laboriously bent to the exact shape. Forcing the wood against the mould puts tension into the instrument which need not be there.

Given his use on non-traditional woods and modern glues, Arnold Black describes himself as 'not entirely a traditionalist'. He is conscious that his own style influences any design he draws up. Even working from an existing plan, he finds there is usually missing information or inaccurate measurement that needs altering in the process. But Arnold is traditional about some things, and has refused to make instruments that are too anachronistic. Some guitar players who have asked for instruments that look and sound like lutes but work like guitars have been turned down.

A different approach to the question of design versus authenticity is taken by Frank O'Gallagher, whose main field is Celtic harps. He has been keen to develop the harp's capacity for a sweet tone, which he thinks has too often been sacrificed for loudness. If this has meant changes to the design of the instrument, so be it. This ready acceptance may be because the harp has varied somewhat in design over the years, but more probably reflects his former occupation as an engineer.

The curve of the harp influences the distribution of string tension on the soundboard, which in turn influences the tone of the instrument. String length is related to the shape of the curve. Frank was inclined to see harp designs as a series of "problems". 'Other people's designs and books all had problems. Seeing these design problems, I got involved — typical engineer I suppose,' he says.

His analytical approach led to a return to many of the features of the early Irish harps, although his sound boxes are quite different. 'I can't make sound boxes like the ancients did because I haven't got the logs that have been sitting 25 feet deep in a bog.' His sound boxes are constructed with multiple veneers, bent across the grain between two moulds.

He is presently using metal strings (silver) on some of his harps, and has constructed a 12th century instrument to Winsome Evans' specifications for the Renaissance Players. The carvings on his harps vary from whimsical patterns of gumnuts and leaves to the traditional double-headed salmon which, looking both heaven- and earthwards, symbolises the belief that the harp brings the two together.

Like most instrument makers, Frank O'Gallagher is frustrated by the lack of easily available good wood, and as sceptical as anybody about wood co-operatives. Several makers have toyed with this idea, but have baulked at the prospect partly because they have their own individual needs, and partly because there is always the problem of how the wood is distributed: who would want some of the proper cuts?

Frank O'Gallagher uses some electronic testing, mainly for turning and testing sound boxes, and thinks that good players don't necessarily produce the best instruments because 'they get lost in playing.' Analysis is the name of the game, with his science training showing again. A musical ear is important for making, but a diagnostic ear is essential. He thinks that training courses should more often assess whether a maker has the sort of mind which could develop a scientific approach to instrument making.

Howard Oberg makes baroque flutes and recorders, and has a different view. He believes it is difficult to make a top quality instrument unless you are a good player. He is a maker and a player (he teaches at the NSW Conservatorium of Music) which means he can tell what is required when testing an instrument.

He began making recorders about 15 years ago because overseas instruments he had been using were wearing out too quickly. He has spent some time over the years watching Fred Morgan work, and has ventured into the use of Australian woods.

Needlewood, beefwood and ironbark are three woods that Howard Oberg prefers. They are all dark woods and ironbark maintains a particularly highly polished appearance for many years with no finish other than buffing and burnishing. He believes that this wood could well replace the traditional ebony and rosewoods. Beefwood is exceptionally oily, easy to work with and promising because it does not tend to absorb water from the atmosphere. Unlike most other stringed instrument construction, there is no gluing involved in recorder making, so Howard does not need to work in a controlled atmosphere. Robert Meadows and Arnold Black both have small workrooms (dry boxes) where a certain level of humidity is kept constant. Cut wood is stored there before being worked.

These different craftsmen have their own perceptions of the market they supply. John Hall is keen to do more work with cellos, an extension of his work with bass violas, and a reflection of the pleasure he gets from working with the larger stringed instruments. He would be interested in further experimentation with the use of native woods but finds it difficult because the instrument wouldn't look or sound like the cello that players expected. 'Makers really are at the mercy of players. No matter how good you think an instrument might be, it's got no value at all unless someone good wants to play it,' he says.

Robert Meadows thinks that the Australian market is slightly more "open-minded" than the English one. He has found people here more willing to try something new or different. And for this instrument maker, who likes to see the instruments he's made from time to time just to make sure they're 'getting along OK', that's a good sign.

Fran Simons

Fran Simons is a freelance journalist with a particular interest in Australian music and music education. She was formerly Research Officer at the Australia Music Centre and now edits the Centre's quarterly newsletter.

Jill Hinrichsen, 'Tranquility'

Sandra Deery, 'Cascade'

AUSTRALIAN FIBRE ART WORKSHOP

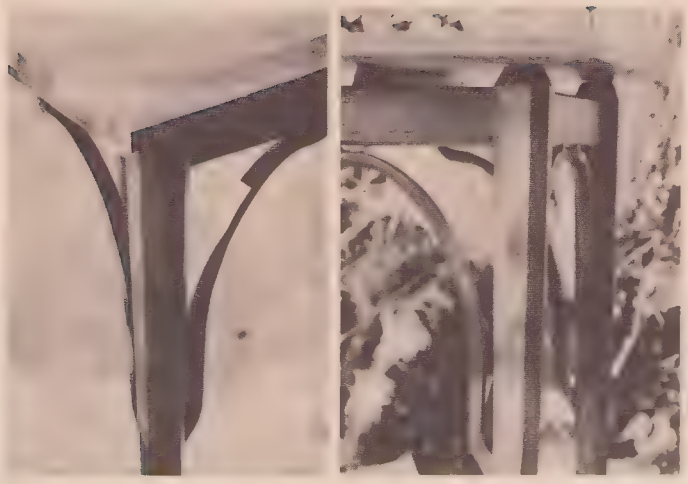
THE Australian Fibre Art Workshop's most recent exhibition at Wool House, Melbourne (Sept. 13-25) initiated an interesting new direction for weaving. There was no apparent battle with the "cottagey" image nor attempts at high art. Clearly, the objective was to make weaving both functional and elegant. This objective was enhanced by the incorporation of furniture settings into the overall design, thereby giving a positive impression of weaving's decorative potential.

Each of the weavers, Jill Hinrichsen, Carol Downey, Jill Sanders, Sandra Deery, Helen Samuel, Pat De Mole, Mandy Gunn and Dianne Ounapuu agreed to restrain their use of colour to a particular pallet. This resulted in a thoroughly integrated colour scheme based on the fashion forecasts of interior designers and the able assistance of Doncaster Furnishers. Judging from both the comments and sales, the market was pleasantly surprised and receptive to such an up-to-date presentation.

Following the workshop's success earlier this year in exporting work to Raya Gallery in Singapore, this exhibition builds on the strength of the group to determine new directions. Increasingly there is a willingness amongst the group to move into architectural spaces and to meet the constraints of a given colour scheme and scale on thoroughly professional terms. Such motivation bodes well for the future, not only for the workshop but for textile arts in general.

K.L.

Dianne Ounapuu, 'Runner'



Red cedar champagne table by Alain Babinard, 1982

FIRST PIECE PURCHASED FOR THE NEW HENRY KENDALL COLLECTION

THE Forestry Commission of NSW has made its first purchase of the newly established Henry Kendall Collection of Fine Woods Arts and Crafts.

The piece, a red cedar champagne table created by Alain Babinard, a member of the Woodworkers' Group of NSW, has already won the Forestry Commission prize for 'Originality' at the 1982 Exhibition staged by the Group.

The Henry Kendall Collection was announced at the same Exhibition by the Commissioner for Forests, Dr. Wal Gentle. The Collection is aimed at furthering Australian culture by fostering its expression in native woods.

Some of the conditions relating to the Collection are that the work must be at least 75% by weight Australian wood; it must be executed by a person resident in Australia during the whole of its making; and it must in some way express Australian attitudes and aspirations. Alain's work complies with these conditions. The table is made from red cedar harvested many years ago, which Alain found when visiting a timber yard in the Sydney suburb of Banksia, in 1979.

He started work on the table in 1980 and worked on it intermittently for nearly two years. The finished piece was first shown at the 1982 Exhibition of the Woodworkers Group of NSW.

Alain said, 'When cut, these dust-covered beams revealed the most inspiring grain and colour. The concept of the table developed as I dressed the timber'.

Alain started with the legs then completed the top before adding the table's distinctive features — the joining braces and stressed connectors. It is these elegant braces and connectors that join the legs to the table top. The legs themselves do not touch the top directly.

Alain intends to keep in contact with the results of his labour. The table is waxed with beeswax and Alain waits to add another three or four waxings because, 'the more you polish, the better it comes up'. He expects the table to age very well — 'in say, the next 50 years or so'.

The Forestry Commission of NSW will again attend the Woodworkers Group Exhibition this year with the aim of presenting Alain with a plaque noting the inclusion of his table in the Collection. The Forestry Commission will also be looking for new pieces to purchase for the Collection.

Craftworkers interested in finding out more about the Henry Kendall Collection and conditions for acceptance are invited to contact the Publicity Officer, Forestry Commission of NSW by writing, or personally calling at the Commission's offices at 95 York Street, Sydney, 2000.

Calvin Noack,
Forestry Commission of NSW

'INTERPRETATIONS'

GRYPHON GALLERY, JUNE-JULY, 1983

THIS exhibition was rather intriguingly subtitled: 'Three fibre artists and a sculptor.' the risk in any group show is that the works will not belong well together — at worst visually arguing with each other, at best silently and reservedly occupying their separate areas of space.

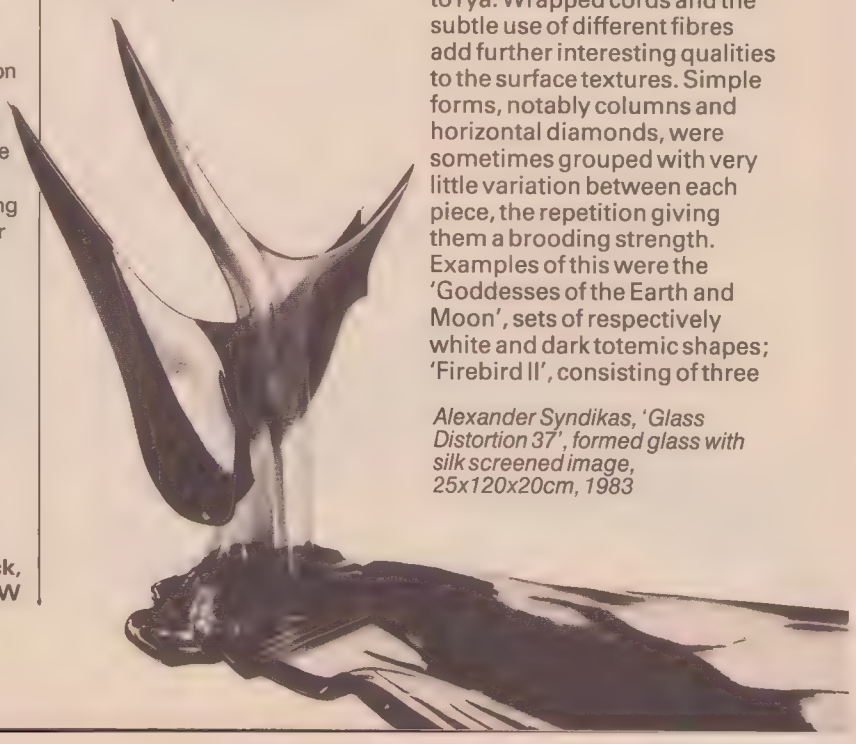
This was not the case with 'Interpretations'. As we have come to expect of the Gryphon Gallery, the work of the four artists was chosen and arranged to complement rather than compete, to augment rather than argue. There was a happy balance between two-dimensional pieces on the walls, sculptural pieces of slightly varying scale in the floor area, and one piece, comparatively monumental in scale, placed in the position of importance in this well proportioned gallery.

The three fibre artists represented were Alison Magilton, Ann Greenwood, Sophie Placek, and the sculptor Marc Clark. All except Sophie Placek are well established in their fields, represented collectively in Victorian and interstate collections, public, private and corporate, and recognized for their control of media and the strength of their personal styles. Sophie Placek shares these qualities, and though a newcomer to Australia (she arrived from Poland in 1981) she will no doubt establish her place in the fibre arts.

The fibre artists are all weavers, which perhaps explains why their works were sympathetic, but they each take a different approach, thus avoiding repetition or competition. The works were arranged formally, with Ann Greenwood's and Alison Magilton's each occupying a wall, Sophie Placek's placed on pedestals of varying heights in the centre, and, as mentioned earlier, Marc Clark's piece, 'Altar II,' placed in an imaginary apse in front of Ann Greenwood's 'Resurrection.'

This sort of arrangement is satisfying, inviting homage, even respect perhaps, but in this case, the variety of approaches avoided a static display, and invited the spectator to stroll around the exhibition space.

Ann Greenwood's woven hangings continue to be classical, controlled and timeless. They are shaped off the loom, and explore the possibilities and qualities of the heavy suspended textile, allowed to fold, enclosing deep spaces, the edges forming complementary areas. The basic colour of each weaving forms subtle, differential tones because of the varied surface textures used ranging from flat to rya. Wrapped cords and the subtle use of different fibres add further interesting qualities to the surface textures. Simple forms, notably columns and horizontal diamonds, were sometimes grouped with very little variation between each piece, the repetition giving them a brooding strength. Examples of this were the 'Goddesses of the Earth and Moon', sets of respectively white and dark totemic shapes; 'Firebird II', consisting of three



Alexander Syndikas, 'Glass Distortion 37', formed glass with silk screened image, 25x120x20cm, 1983

red stingray shapes; and the 'Awakening', a group of vertical panels.

To my mind the least successful of Ann Greenwood's works was 'Totem', the only piece in which she introduces a geometric tapestry pattern. Perhaps because of the understatement present in the other works, the formality of this piece seems contrived and intrusive.

Alison Magilton's tapestries by contrast are conventionally shaped, two-dimensional and figurative. Her subject is the most important element, and colours, tones and the weaver's skill are used as devices to state, define and express it. She avoids monotony by drawing her ideas for subjects from a wide variety of sources, explaining that this tends to happen automatically to tapestry weavers. After choosing the subject, refinement and problem-solving involved in a major piece requires many weeks of slow and careful work, during which the mind is often busy formulating the next idea. In this exhibition her range of subjects provided enormous variety. 'Just about Everybody was There' was a social page satire, with the pathetic qualities of the artificially gay ladies being superimposed on their forced *joie de vivre* — shades of Goya. The 'Self-Portrait' was more painterly, a careful exploration of the ability of this medium to create realistic effects. 'Wild Water', by contrast, was an almost abstract pattern of rocks and rippling water, with the edges shaped to echo the circular movements of the design. The most appealing piece, for me, was 'Ash Wednesday', a small, almost experimental piece, highly emotive and a very direct response to the tension and oppression of that dreadful day.

Sophie Placek's three-dimensional pieces provided both the contrast and the link between the other weavers. Smaller in scale, almost uniform in tone, seductively tactile, their complex dynamic surfaces belied the simplicity of their organic forms which were derived from pods, seeds and embryonic plant life. Sophie studied fine art and carpet design in Poland, and now works with commercially spun natural yarns, valuing the constrictions which the industrial processes provide, preferring to spend time on constructing forms rather than adapting or making yarns. Sisal, jute, hemp, flax and camel hair string were used, most often utilising the soft graduations of their natural tones, but ocassionally subtly dyed, as in 'Oval Wrapped Form', or vividly coloured as in 'Red Line', where there were deliberately placed contrasts between the harsh red and natural sisal, between flat and round yarn.

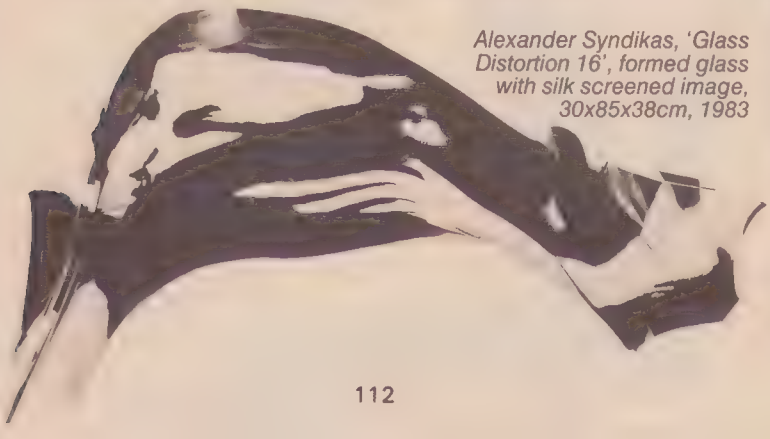
The forms were constructed from wire and loose fibre, then covered with small overlapping frame-woven sections and/or very tight wrapping, glued to enforce rigidity.

Marc Clark's 'Altar II', made from bronze, limestone and pine, and Ann Greenwood's 'Resurrection' provided a major focus of scale and weight to this exhibition which otherwise may have been merely a collection of objects. Again I was struck by the contrasts of texture, finish, colour, shape and depth within the grouping of forms which made up a single visual statement. This symbolic altar-form related more to Stonehenge or Karnak than to any place of Christian worship, which the titles suggest, although this feeling may have been evoked by the images of fire and pagan godesses flanking it.

As an exhibition 'Interpretations' worked very well indeed, due mainly to careful combinations of styles, scale, forms and materials; the title had given promise of just this.

Anna Griffiths

Anna Griffiths teaches art/craft at Star of the Sea Senior School in Victoria and was formerly an art crtic for *The Herald,* Melbourne.



Alexander Syndikas, 'Glass Distortion 16', formed glass with silk screened image, 30x85x38cm, 1983

STUDIO DESIGNED FASHION SHOW AT WREST POINT HOTEL CASINO, TASMANIA

A spectacular fashion parade was held at Wrest Point Hotel Casino, Hobart on 28 May to launch a small but potentially significant new industry for Tasmania — the Original Fashion Industry.

Organised by Glenorchy Jaycees in association with the Crafts Council of Tasmania, the parade featured a wide range of garments that were studio designed and handmade in Tasmania.

There are a large number of Tasmanian craftspeople working in traditional areas of fibrecraft, such as embroidery, spinning and weaving, knitting and applique. But today more craftspeople are seriously designing and making whole outfits, while others specialise in accessory garments.

The project was aimed at attracting public attention to this budding industry which has recently established a workshop entitled 'Into the Marketplace'. The workshop, conducted by Yvonne Newell, a leading NSW fashion identity, will provide invaluable information and training to participants, enabling them to present their work in a professional manner that will ensure its acceptance on the Australian fashion scene.

Three prizes were presented for works featured in the parade. The winner of the outstanding complete outfit section, Lee Hildyard, received a cash prize of $300 donated by Websters Ltd., and Roberts Stewart & Co. Ltd., and a return air trip to Melbourne donated by TAA to promote her own work and the work of Tasmanian craftspeople generally.

The prize for the jacket, shawl or other accessory item went to Rocky Rozella (Ruth Rose) who received $300, donated by Island State Credit Union. Lee Hildyard also won the $300 prize, presented by the Australian Wool Corporation, for the most outstanding woollen garment.

The project's major sponsor was the Australian Wool Corporation, whose support enabled the organisers to present an exciting and professional event to launch Tasmanian fashion. In addition to the original garments the parade featured some of Tasmania's top models and dancers, supported with live music by the Be-Bop Brothers and some exciting lighting and stage effects.

K. L.

BOOKS

'The Craft of the Weaver', by A. Sutton, P. Collingwood and G. St Aubyn Hubbard, Pitman Publishing. $19.95.

This book was originally published by the British Broadcasting Corporation to accompany a series of television programs, first broadcast in 1980 and repeated in 1982, and it is written simply and explicitly in everyday language.

It is a paperback with a difference, packed with timeless information and presented in an excellent format, that is easy to follow, with numerous clear black and white illustrations that are well co-ordinated with the text. There are also clear references to colour plates of reasonable quality, which are a pleasant surprise in a paperback. Personally, I would like to have it in a hard cover because I believe

t has a lasting value — and at $19.95 it is reasonably priced.

The authors are all accomplished in their own area of handweaving. Anne Sutton has taught and assessed at leading colleges throughout Britain and is internationally known for her architectural wall hangings and her contribution to the fibre arts world-wide. Peter Collingwood is known to every serious weaver as the author of the *Techniques of Rug Weaving,* and *The Technique of Sprang,* as well as other works. He has developed unique techniques for his macro-gauze wall hangings and his floor rugs, both of which are recognised internationally. Geraldine St. Aubyn Hubbard has taught at some of Britain's leading colleges and is noted for her fine clothing fabrics, particularly scarves in silk, cashmere and wool.

One would expect authors of this calibre to produce an authoritative book, as indeed this is. In addition, they are professional weavers who are aware of the need for a realistic approach towards making a marketable product while still maintaining standards of excellence in both design and technique. Therefore they have increased their efficiency by looking closely at ways of simplifying and speeding up techniques.

This is a "how to" book so well expressed that it can be understood by the beginner and will continue to be useful as a reference book. It could well be used as a text book by teachers and many current methods of instruction would be improved considerably by adopting the economy of words, the logical sequence of development, and the thoroughness of explanation of equipment and technique found in its pages. Editor Anna Jackson says: 'This is not a book of rules, every technique has many variations, and the guidelines we give are those found useful by the writers;' so the reader is not expected to blindly follow instructions. Reasons for each step are given so that one understands the details and possibilities of equipment and techniques. Sound advice is provided for avoiding those pitfalls into which beginners seem to stumble unerringly; and those basic "common sense" facts that come naturally to experienced craftspeople are not taken for granted, but explained clearly and adequately.

In the section on spinning the instructions are interspersed with description of the functions of the equipment which is rather distracting. The spinning techniques, somewhat arbitrarily described, are applicable to British wools and do not necessarily relate to many Australian and New Zealand fleeces. There is a good general explanation of the dye process, dealing with the main traditional natural dyes and mordants, but synthetic dyes are not discussed, nor is there any specific reference to synthetics in the book list. Definitive descriptions of looms and equipment are clear, well illustrated and diagrammed, with all their salient features indicated. The advantages and disadvantages of different types of looms and methods of using them are also discussed. The weaving section deals with everything from calculating the warp to removing the finished cloth from the loom and the explanation is clear and the reason for each step explained, so that one learns not only to weave in a practical, economical and efficient manner, but also gains the understanding that is the basis of personal creative development.

The sincere commitment and enthusiasm of the authors is apparent and must surely fire all but the most inert of readers with a zeal to weave well, and for those who must learn only from the written word, this book will be invaluable. It is worth reading through for sheer enjoyment before it becomes a guide and reference book.

Mary Beeston

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REVIEW PUBLICATIONS
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'The Laughing Australian — A Celebration of Australia's Kookaburra', Toby and Juliana Hooper. Nelson 1982. 127 pages.

Tody and Juliana Hooper have published three books in the general area of Australiana. Now, with the publication of *The Laughing Australian — A Celebration of Australia's Kookaburra,* They have investigated the use of one specific motif. Their earlier books on collecting and buying Australiana and antiques can in no way be described as authoritative. Nor are they intended to be. They are, at best, an entertaining introduction to the subject. No doubt their files are now full of illustrations and quotes unused in earlier texts and they are considering following the *The Laughing Australian* with a series of books on Australian imagery. One contemplates books on the wattle, waratah, koalas, emus, kangaroos, et al, to follow over the next few years. As a set they could sell very nicely in the better souvenir shops, much like the *Terrace Times Cookbooks.*

Why begin with the kookaburra? I can only surmise from the text that the cheeky larrikin image of the "laughing jackass" has drawn them to the admittedly endearing bird. There is no doubt that for those obsessive types drawn to such esoteric fields as toy soldiers or matchbox covers, "Kookaburrabelia" represents a fertile pasture indeed. The authors manage to demonstrate the scope more than adquately despite a lack of selectivity in a few areas.

The book contains many interesting historical anecdotes, although ultimately a book of this nature will be judged on the variety and scope of its illustrations. We see the Kookaburra depicted on a wide variety of postcards and book plates evoking images of Australia's young nationhood. Early watercolours abound; it wears every type of hat imaginable; is disguised in the uniforms of all the Services; wears sporting outfits and is even dressed as Santa Claus. It has been used to sell everything from whips to boot polish, tomato sauce, cake tins, beer, footballs, soft drink, cigarettes, seeds, bulbs, gas stoves and flour. It has been adopted in the insignia of all the Armed Services. The section on the Kookaburra's family, from the much-quoted study of Kookaburras by American, Veronica Parry, makes fascinating reading. The vision of successive members of the kookaburra family dive bombing territorial intruders from all directions makes the No. 1 Bomber Squadron's use of the kookaburra in its insignia most apt.

It is in the area of the decorative arts that I think most interest will lie and this is the weakest section of the book. There is nothing new here which we haven't already seen in any of the general texts. There are, for instance, more illustrations of kookaburras on glass in Marjorie Graham's book, *Australian Glass of the 19th and early 20th Century* than we find here. Sadly missing is Margaret Preston's charming woodcut, exhibited at Tyrrell's in 1923 and widely published in books of Australian relief prints. Considering her pre-eminence in the whole emergence of an Australian identity in art this is a glaring ommission.

The section on modern kookaburras is so badly researched that I suspect it was included as an afterthought. To say that Peter Stripes has designed 'some stunning kookaburra fabrics' is nonsense. Peter Stripes' design, which is used on the endpapers of the book, is nothing but an unfortunate derivative of the more detailed and infinitely better original by Sydney artist, Bruce Goold, whose beautiful linocut poster of the kookaburra, commissioned by the Australian Museum for the opening of their native bird gallery, is also disappointingly absent. This is probably the finest kookaburra illustration done since the Second World War.

However, the book does provide an interesting insight into the way this bizarre kingfisher with the raucous laugh has earned its place in the Australian mystique. The first settlers felt the bird was mocking their misery yet it has come to represent the cheeky, larrikin, anti-authoritarian image that Australians have embraced as a national characteristic.

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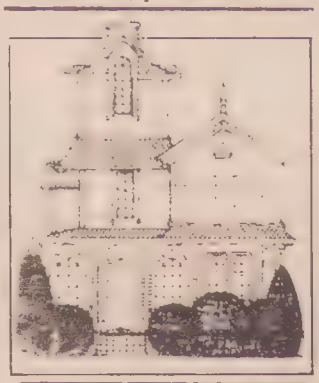

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BOOKS

'Down to Earth — Mud Architecture: an old idea, a new future' (192 pages) based on an exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, conceived and directed by Jean Dethier. Published by Thames and Hudson, London, 1982. (English language edition).

The impressive book constitutes a milestone in the recording of the history and development of earth building throughout the world, from the primitive to the modern. The contents are based on a major exhibition which opened at the Pompidou Centre, Paris, in October 1981. The exhibition was conceived and directed by French architecture Jean Dethier. Following its showing in Paris, it has toured through Europe and is presently in North America.

In his introduction to the book, M. Dethier strongly advocates a return to the essential, spiritual qualities of raw earth, particularly at a time when modern architecture is facing the alienating effects of an "international style". The cultural amnesia which results from such preoccupations was radically challenged in the 1970s when the world energy crisis struck. This crisis brought about a dramatic reassessment of values and compiled the western industrial societies to seek more socially responsible, energy-conscious solutions to the vexing question of providing shelter for mankind.

It points out that at least one third of the world's population lives in earth shelter of one kind or another. It goes on to describe the most common building techniques, being adobe (mud brick) and pisé (rammed earth). It also reveals the earliest recorded example of this type of building, including the city of Jericho, constructed 10,000 year ago, and a substantial part of the Great Wall of China, in the 3rd century B. C. It further reveals that the North American Indians were building in raw, unbaked earth as long ago as 1350.

The book is structured in two main parts: Historical and Traditional (Part1) and Modern (Part 2). Unfortunately, the more modern examples, in being relegated towards the back of the book, do not reveal themselves with quite the same appeal and significance as do the traditional. The more exotic imagery of the Middle East and Northern Africa is conveyed in full strength, both in visual and sensual terms, with language bordering on the emotional and ecstatic. This is a pity, as modern earth wall architecture in western countrties is presently alive and well, particularly in North America and Australia. In Melbourne, for example, mud brick housing is assuming something of a cult image. Those fortunate enough to live in the Eltham area in an Alistair Knox designed home, are seen to be in an ultimate position of privilege and lifestyle. Although Australia receives only a fleeting reference in the front, and is mentioned in the bibliography, no actual photographic examples of either our historic or modern work is featured. This is considered to be a serious omission, since all other continents of the world are represented. Other sources of annoyance include some textural inaccuracies relating to the dates of origin of earth building in various countries, including Australia (earth houses are recorded in Australia in 1810 and not 1823 as stated), and the poorly located photographic footnotes. This latter problem makes the identification by the reader a frustrating and bothersome exercise, as the notes are tucked away in obscure corners, quite unrelated to the photographic material being described.

Despite these deficiencies, the book should satisfy those seeking a source of inspiration in both architectural and craft terms. With its strong emphasis towards the primitive, spiritual and creative forces of African and other cultures, the book is a potential source of stimulation. The chapters on Ornamentation and Sensuality overwhelming reveal a sense of abstract, gestural and symbolic expression underlying the human psyche. This appears to emerge when man is faced with the challenge of creating and fashioning his own shelter, using raw earth as the medium. The highly decorated facade of an earth building in Mauritania, West Africa, is contrasted with the more massive, autocratic elements of a baroque church in Lima, Peru. The highly sculptured symbolic forms and sensual imagery of the great mosque at Djenne in Mali reveal a strong social and spiritual affinity with the earth, and express various subtle precepts and beliefs. These examples combine to form an overall impression of mankind working at the peak of his human and creative achievement.

In broad terms, the book appears to achieve its success largely through the nature and interest of its subject matter, presented through imaginative and revealing photography, including some unusual interiors such as that of an arab family's reception room in southwest Saudi Arabia, and a mosque at Zaria, Nigeria. It honestly addresses examples of fake traditional or imitation earth building. This includes a luxury hotel in Sante Fe, New Mexico, constructed of reinforced concrete. This contrasts with a modern, well conceived town house complex at La Luz, in Albuquerque, designed by Antoine Predock and already listed in the American National Register of Historic Places.

In summary, despite certain design faults and inaccuracies, *Down to Earth* is seen as an important publishing event, achieving its significance in presenting the state of the art in all its diverse facets and forms. It survives a somewhat pedestrian English translation (from the original French edition) to emerge as a worthwhile record of what appears to be a stunning exhibition.

It is hoped that the availability of this book in Australia, together with a growing interest in the ethic of earth building will be sufficient to persuade the powers that be to bring the main overseas exhibition to this country, so that we are not deprived of the opportunity to keep abreast with progress in this most vital of creative fields.

Bob Young, A. R. A. I. A.

'Palm-leaf and Paper. Illustrated Manuscripts of India and South-East Asia', John Guy, with an essay by O. P. Agrawal, published by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1982.

One enriching aspect of living at this particular time is the increasing availability of information about past human activities, which would once have been the preserve of the specialist. *Palm-leaf and Paper* was compiled as the catalogue for the recent exhibition of 'Indian and South-East Asian Manuscripts' at the National Gallery of Victoria. A scholarly work in its own right, it would be a valuable reference book for any student of Indian, Sri Lankan and S. E. Asian cultures, but it is also written in a style clear and readable to the layman. Good quality paper stock and excellent book design also enhance the reader's pleasure. Copious illustrations in colour and black and white show not only the manuscripts but also their wooden covers, storage boxes and writing implements, as well as sculpture and mural painting relevant to the miniatures.

Most of the manuscripts are of Hindu or Buddhist religious significance and the accompanying text fully explains the theme as well as giving artistic details of colour and style. One of the aims of the exhibition was to show the cultural interdependence between these diverse styles. The book, organised geographically from India to Indonesia, with a clear map to show major centres, succeeds very well in this and in describing the influences from the Moslem and European worlds.

A section by Om Prakesh Agrawal on the care and conservation of palm-leaves and paper would be invaluable to anyone responsible for preserving these fragile treasures. It also provides information on types of palm-leaves used, their preparation in various countries and inks used. I was sorry that the manufacture of some of the papers mentioned, for example Thai Khoi paper, and Jawanese[1] dluwang, were not similarly discussed but no doubt such information could be obtained from the references listed in the extensive bibliography.

Katharine Nix

[1] Jawa is modern Indonesian spelling. Javanese is used in the book.

Katharine Nix is a full-time papermaker, living in Canberra, who specialises in the use of natural plant fibres.

'Wool and Beyond', proceedings of the First Australian Fibre Conference, Melbourne, January 11-23, 1981.

IF you are in the mood to discover a myriad of details pertaining to the fibre arts — from philosophy to fable, science to intuition and from archaeology to technology — there is now available a locally published book which addresses itself particularly to

the Australian fibre artist/craftsman. Within its three hundred plus pages one finds reference to fascinating beliefs such as the Navajo Indian myth that "Spider Women" taught their women to weave on the looms which "Spider Men" had taught the men to make. Such a myth reinforces the assertion, made elsewhere in the text, that the human species has learned much from watching other living organisms deal with fibre. Insects, spiders, birds, mammals and even fish weave environments for themselves out of "found" fibre and sometimes go to the extent of adorning them decoratively. A prime example is the bower bird which paints its bower with a mixture of saliva and masticated vegetable material. It has been know to steal bags of "laundry blue" to give its bower a particularly exotic finish. The tailor bird of southern Asia actually stitches broad leaves together to make its nest and then lines it with soft fibres for extra comfort, while the sea otter reclines on a woven bed of kelp to eat and sleep at sea. It ties its babies to the mat so that they cannot drown, or float away!

There are fascinating details in this publication about felt, which is said to have been discovered when Noah spread the floor of his ark with wool fibres to make it more comfortable. Of course the animals trod this down into felt. Some millennia later, in approximately 400 BC, Xenophon was inspired to remark on the wonderful tall felt hat which was worn by the king of Persia. The use of felt almost disappeared in our century with the demise of the man's felt hat after the 1950's. Perhaps felt will once more come into its own with the knowledge gleaned from this publication that, according to the beliefs of the natives of Russian Turkestan, 'Scorpions, phalanges, tarantulas, karaturks and snakes cannot move on felt mattresses'!

There is some reference to the history of fibres in Australia — with details of the Aboriginals' methods of basket weaving. The first white settlement in this country was in dire need of members with a knowledge of fibres but unfortunately the first master weaver to be enticed to Australia, in 1798, fell overboard and was drowned on his way here. Captain Cook had found time on his three journeys to Australia to catalogue the meagre cloth and dye production he encountered in the Pacific, but it was the task of that fascinating Victorian botanist Baron F. Von Mueller to encourage the first screening of Australian plants for their dyestuff potential.

I must confess that I began to turn the pages more and more eagerly as my reading of this volume proceeded. If I have so far given the impression that it is but an encyclopaedia of miscellania, I must now stress that it also contains an extraordinary wealth of practical and technical data and enough mature and reasoned discussion of design and aesthetics to recommend it as something of a minor treatise in that area too.

The proceedings of 'Wool and Beyond' are presented in a handsome, inexpensive volume compiled and edited by Marg Van Roy, chairperson of the First Australian Fibre Conference. It was published by the Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria. Given the voluntary nature of much of its production it is an ambitious publication — matching in scale and thoroughness the arrangements for the conference itself.

With a budget of over $125,000, the conference was modelled on the type of massive international gathering which is common overseas. Supported to a limited degree by grants from the State Government of Victoria, the Crafts Board and the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council and magnificently hosted and sponsored by the Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria, this conference drew hundreds of participants who came from all states of Australia, the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, Japan, the United Kingdom and Papua New Guinea. It was largely financed by the fees paid for registration and attendance at lectures and workshops.

As Marg Van Roy explains in her introduction to the proceedings, the structure of the conference was designed to concentrate on one area, weaving, rather than to cover the entire spectrum of fibre techniques. This theme was further divided into the major areas of design, fibres, dyes, techniques, and marketing. Participants could choose to attend lectures and workshops on all aspects of these topics — one of the most popular was the studio run by the Victorian Tapestry Workshop. In addition to this program there were exhibitions throughout Melbourne featuring woven tapestries, baskets, wall hangings, garments, sculptures and rugs. The major accompanying exhibition was at the Meat Market Craft Centre. A fashion parade with more than seventy original hand woven and fashioned garments was sponsored by the Australian Wool Corporation. Every detail was attended to — right down to the name tags and shoulder bags which were made by over one hundred voluntary Victorian weavers to be given to the conference participants. These were woven in colours chosen as symbolic of Australian conditions.

The five sub-themes of the conference produced some very exciting papers and discussion sessions. In the section devoted to design I was particulary taken by the papers presented by Mary Beeston and Gary Benson. They presented conceptual extremes, or alternatives. Mary Beeston's 'An Approach to Design and Colour' reflected her enormous enthusiasm for and knowledge of those attitudes to design and colour which were first disseminated by the teachers of the Bauhaus and then later became rather standard fare in fine art departments in art schools. She extends this practice to design for textile arts, and does so with such enthusiasm and persuasion that one is convinced that there must be still plenty of mileage in the approach. She argues for the primacy of design principles over concepts and, while admitting that there can be no rules for good design, projects her faith that much can be learned. She quotes Sir Herbert Reads' belief that, 'What a student learns in a basic course is a new language, a language of forms. It is nobody's business to teach him what to say in this new language, he should then use it to communicate his own vision.' She depends on those masters of twentieth century design — Itten, Albers, Vasarely — and an understanding of the gestalt psychologists' concept of perception, as publicised by Rudolf Arnheim, for much of her method.

At the other extreme were the comments of members of Adelaide's Fibre Works Collective, presented in a paper by Gary Benson. This group came together to produce "public art" projects to coincide with the 1980 Adelaide Festival. What was started then had not yet been completed at the time of the Fibre Conference. The projects were more to do with the realisation of a concept than with fibre methodology or fastidiousness of design. When Tineke Adolphus made her large and mis-shapen "laundry" out of primary coloured spinnaker cloth and hung it across the Festival Plaza she remarked, almost as an after-though, that it 'looked quite nice'. For her it was important just to hang out the washing in a public place and so to provide the Australian urban environment with features seldom seen here, but commonly beheld in Mediterranean and Asian cities. She enjoyed cutting and making clothes that didn't have to fit anyone. It was, as she said 'Zoom and Go'. The artist enjoyed the process while the spectator was expected to receive a conceptual jolt.

Pat Grummet and Richard Brecknock also took up the "washing" theme. They planned to document the history of a family from 1959 to 1979 by creating a piece based on the evidence of the clothes-line. Jenni Dudley had the particularly lovely idea of creating "building covers" which could be used to disguise buildings in the process of construction or renovation. She described the Christo-like persistence with which she attended to all the legal and practical details involved. Her experiences led her to the observation that two years is not a long time to spend on a big project.

In the fibres section I enjoyed the article entitled 'The Use of Fibres and Fibre Techniques by Animals other than Man' by Heather Johnson. Although she disclaimed any pretensions to a high level of scientific expertise in the area of animal behaviour, her paper was rich in detail and anecdote and a fascinating account of the use of fibre in the natural habitat. Similarly, Trevor Semmen's article on 'Felt-Making' went far beyond the technical aspects to indulge in fascinating historical background material. I thought Janet De Boer's comments on the desirability of using cotton in Australia was highly sensible. In her paper 'Cotton Comes to Australia' she stressed that fibre's superiority over wool for

handweavers working in the hotter and more humid regions of the country. She gave very detailed information on how to procure the cotton and how to treat it prior to use. There were also some useful technical articles on the selection and treatment of merino and other fleeces.

The dyes section provided another broad range of data — from articles on the history and science of natural dye subjects in Australia, to the experimentation of enthusiastic amateurs. I enjoyed Jean Carmans account of her work with 'The Eucalypt Dyes'. The history of her activity with dyes is idiosyncratically Australian. After attending a 1968 seminar run by the Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria she went home and tried out the eleven species of eucalypts growing in her own garden. She then went to work trying *all* the species of eucalypts in Victoria for their colourant potential. Later still, with the co-operation of various State forestry departments, she extended her study to eucalypts all over Australia and Papua New Guinea. In 1974 she received an Australia Council grant to continue her work and to write her book which outlines the dyestuff properties of nearly two hundred species of Australian eucalypts.

There were also papers on 'Synthetic Dyestuffs and Their Use' by Eduard Voitkuns and 'The Hand Application of Cold Water Dyes' by Inga Hunter.

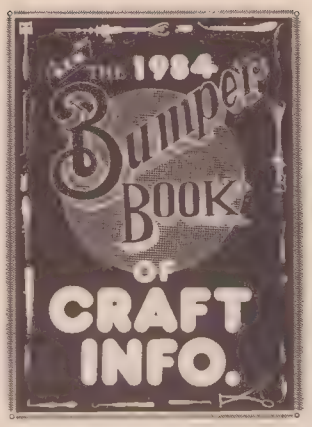
A feature of the techniques section was the emphasis on basketry — with discussions of traditional basket weaving in Australia, New Zealand and Japan. The marketing section had some valuable practical advice for artists and hand craftsmen. In her paper, 'Standards of Work for Sale to the Public', Eve Rashleigh pulled no punches when she criticised the poor quality of some craft items offered for sale. She admonished members of the public who are willing to allow unprincipled craftspeople to take advantage to the detriment of those who work with pride and integrity.

The aforementioned merely touches upon the content of the volume — there are many more excellent reports and the script of a very invigorating keynote address presented by Robert Bell, President of the Crafts Council of Australia. He reminded all concerned that, 'At any moment in this country, while sheep are quietly growing their fleece, and weavers are contemplating ways of spinning, dyeing and weaving it, computers are also quietly monitoring the countless metres of fibre and textile for use in every aspect of our lives. These products are often destined for places where traditional technologies are being eroded or lost, ironically, at the time when they provide us with themes, ideas and values which we think we are losing.'

A minor criticism of this volume is that it does not contain biographical information on its contributors. I feel I would have liked to know more about them — their nationality, artistic or academic standing, their contribution to the fibre arts and the motivating forces which brought them together to provide the content of this most ambitious undertaking.

I believe the proceedings of 'Wool and Beyond' are a fundamental record of a valuable event and should find their place on the shelves of all Australian libraries — as well as in the workrooms and studios of countless fibre crafts people.

Jenny Zimmer



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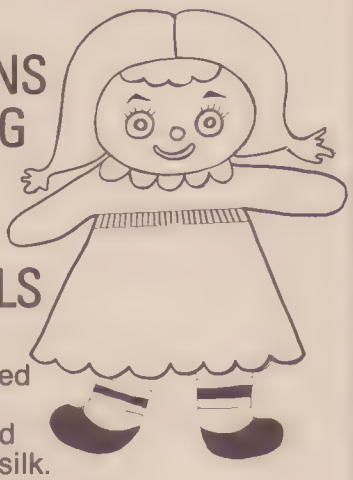

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LETTERS

I would like to comment on David Williams' article, 'Educational and Vocational Training in the Crafts — The Scene for the 1980's'. I endorse his comment, 'depends on the skill and enthusiasm of the individual teacher', but wonder how the comment, 'the outcome of crafts experience in school and teacher education programs does not impress ... its quality is varied, (and) does not seem to have extended involvement.' This demise of extended involvement is largely due to lack of time for in-depth study. Indeed, "time" is paramount to producing quality products, which are a result of many days involvement. Until the CAE's, particularly for the initial teacher training programs, recognise "time" to "do" and "know about" the crafts, we will not be able to meet the high anticipated stardards.

It was decided by the WACAE not to include craft works from the Dip. T. (3 year training) as it was anticipated that these would not meet the requirements for publication. However, some of the work included was from the 4th year students, that is, potential High School teachers, not all of whom are David Williams' mature age people. Perhaps a future edition of the Tertiary Craft Supplement could refer to the age of craftspeople who are under 25.

Jenny Allen
Art Education Department
School of Education
Western Auetralian CAE
— Mount Lawley Campus

I recently read an article in *Craft Australia* on the Conservation of works of Art, and I wish to comment on the section dealing with the training of conservators.

1. The Conservation Training Program in Australia, which as you correctly state is the only one of its kind, is situated at the Canberra College of Advanced Education and *not* the Canberra School of Art. It has been in operation for five years.

2. There are a number of reasons why we have a limited intake into our courses. First, it is not possible to teach large groups of students the practical aspects of conserving and restoring works of art and artefacts. Students work on real objects, many of which are either of high monetary value or of historical/cultural significance, and a 1:1 student to staff ratio is essential. We could of course expand our facilities and teaching staff, however, the employment situation in conservation in Australia is rather limited, and our graduates experience difficulty in gaining satisfactory employment. Therefore, the intake into the courses has been limited accordingly. We do not foresee that there will ever be a large number of jobs in conservation as most conservators are employed in cultural institutions.

3. Persons who train overseas must consider the following: (a) Are they being trained in the conservation of collections which are applicable to Australia. (b) The overseas training fees are approximately $6,000 per annum.
(c) There are few employment opportunities in Australia.

4. The overseas training programs do offer conservation training in areas of specialisation not covered by the Canberra CAE courses, e.g. furniture, musical instruments, clocks, historic buildings.

5. Most conservation training courses are of 2-3 years duration, not 4 as mentioned in the article.

6. For comparative information it would have been useful to include details of the Conservation courses available at the Canberra CAE.

7. In the list of further addresses for general information for Australians interested in Conservation, could be listed the Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material, P. O. Box 1638, Canberra City, ACT 2601.

Dr. C. Pearson M. B. E.
Principal Lecturer
Conservation of Cultural Materials.

In the interest of historical accuracy (and perhaps to aid future research) I would like to set straight the position about the first entries in the Faenza Competitions by Australian potters, which was inaccurately reported in the Winter issue of *Craft Australia.* In his report on the pots chosen to go to the Faenza International Competition in 1983, Peter Emmett of the Crafts Council Centre Gallery stated that 'Australian potters began competing against the rest of the ceramics world in 1973 when Peter Travis entered his own work and gained a gold medal'. The fact is that Australians, four

of them, competed at Faenza much earlier than the date specified by Peter Emmett.

Patricia Englund and I both sent pots to Faenza in 1966 and they are illustrated on pages 114 and 115 of the official catalogue. In 1967 Patricia Englund and I again sent pots (pages 82 and 83 in the catalogue) and as well Les Blakeborough, who was at Mittagong at the time and Kitty Breedon of Albion, Queensland submitted entries. In 1968 I was again an entrant though I do not have that catalogue but as a result I was invited to exhibit in an International Ceramics Exhibition in West Germany. Les Blakeborough won his gold medal in 1975 along with the others mentioned in the article. Marvellous results for them and for Australian pottery.

It was, of course, terribly expensive to send pots to Faenza and I suppose the grant by the Craft Board to enable the Crafts Council to send "official" entries has made it possible for many more Australian potters to be represented there but it should not be thought that Faenza is for "official" entries only. There is no reason why any potter may not enter his or her own work.

Incidentally, the collections at Faenza, both the local wares and the International Collection composed of winners and other pots, often donated, should be a priority on the itinerary of any potter visiting that part of the world.

Ivan Englund,
Walcha, N.S.W.

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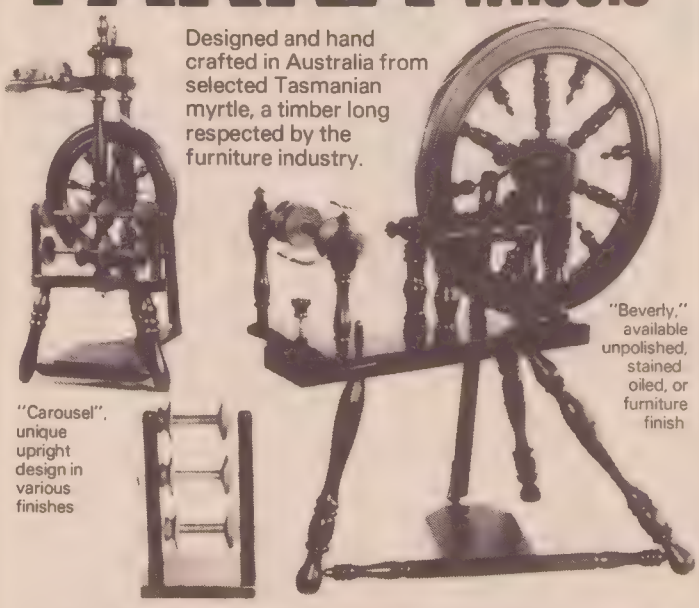

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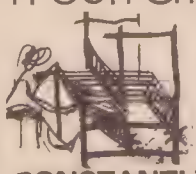

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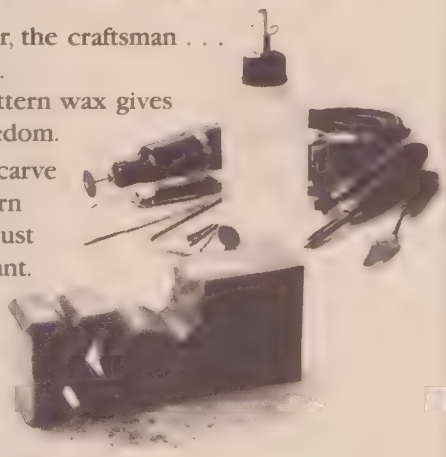

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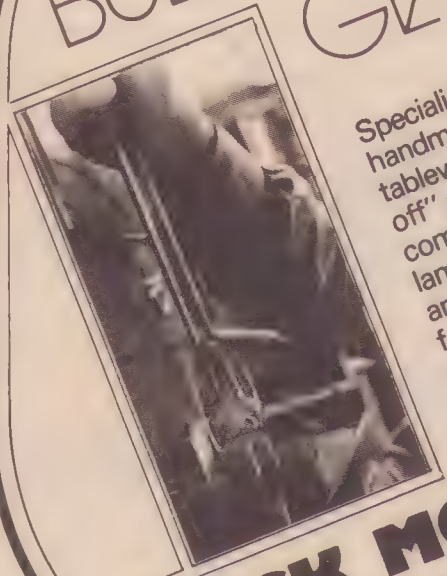

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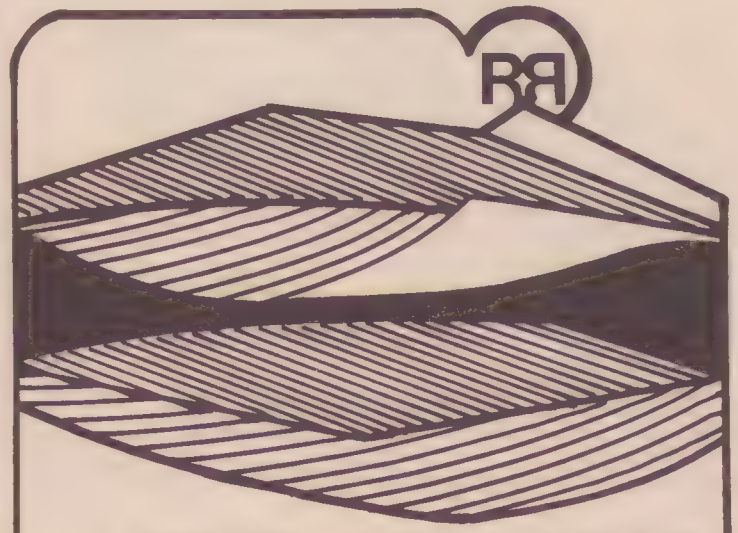

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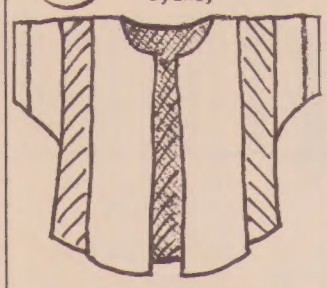

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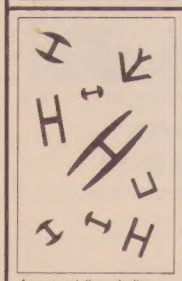

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